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A Jewish reply to Christian
evangelists

A Jewish Reply

TO

Christian Evangelists

BY

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PREFACE

THE articles contained in this book were written as communications to *The Jewish Times* of Montreal, and were published in the columns of that paper; the six articles entitled "On Christian Attempts to Convert Jews," from the 2d February to the 13th April, 1900;

ERRATA

- Page IX, 8th line, should read "show themselves *able* to establish," etc.
- Page 101, 4th line, should read "revelations *of* the Almighty."
- Page 107, 9th line from bottom, should read "published in *your* paper," etc.
- Page 236, 1st line, should read "must have been to the *birth* of Jesus."
- Page 236, 4th line, should read "that he *would* overcome."

OBJECTIONABLE EXPRESSIONS CONTAINED IN THE BOOK

local press of the proceedings at meetings of the Protestant Ministerial Association of Montreal, held for the purpose of promoting the conversion of Jews, which attracted attention and made some response necessary; and the letter to *The Jewish Times* from a Protestant

clergyman who took an active and prominent part at those meetings, mentioned in the first article. The second series of articles was written in consequence of the great interest that was shown in the first series; and the third series followed another letter to *The Times* from the same clergyman. When Christian ministers take to writing to Jewish newspapers for the purpose of furthering their proselytizing schemes, it is time to repel their attacks.

The Christian contention is that there are three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—each of whom has his own separate individuality, and may not be confounded with either of the other two, yet has an equal share in the Divine Nature, and is in every respect co-equal and co-eternal with the others. Unfortunately, however, for this fundamental claim of Christianity, it happens that One of these three persons—He whom we know as “The Almighty,” or “The Eternal,” and whom our Christian friends distinguish by the name of “The Father”—has declared that besides Himself there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and no one else. These declarations of the Eternal cover the whole question that is at issue between the Jew and the Christian; and we invite our Christian friends to face and discuss them if they can.

Hitherto they have not done so. It has been a characteristic of Christian Evangelists, from the time of the Apostles down to the present day, to evade and ignore the many declarations made by the Eternal, that besides Himself there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and no one else. Instead of devoting their attention to those declarations, and explaining to us how they can be

reconciled with and be made to establish the existence of the other gods and the other saviour whom they ask us to worship, our Christian friends have given us nothing else than endless repetitions of perversions of the Hebrew Scriptures. For nearly nineteen centuries the followers of Jesus have afflicted us with arguments that are proofs only either of their ignorance of those scriptures or of their want of honesty in religious matters; and they have always failed to influence Jewish belief, because, among other reasons, they have always adopted a line of argument that has only evoked Jewish contempt.

The reason usually given by Christian Evangelists for persisting in their unavailing efforts to procure the conversion of Jews to Christianity is that they are required to bear witness for Jesus. But it may be suggested to these worthy Christians that there are different ways of bearing witness—some that are creditable, and others that are not. If Christian ministers confined their labors at testifying for Jesus to exhortations from their own pulpits, to work among their own people, or even among other people who had not received a different mandate from a Higher Power, they might, perhaps, claim that they were within their rights in what they were doing; although the validity of such an argument cannot be admitted by us, because the sin of inculcating false and idolatrous doctrines remains the same, whether they be preached to Jews or to non-Jews. But, waiving or even granting them that point, there certainly can be no more justification for Christian attempts to proselytize the Jews than there would be for a litigant to bribe and suborn the witnesses of the opposite party in a lawsuit; or for the rulers of a country or the generals

clergyman who took an active and prominent part at those meetings, mentioned in the first article. The second series of articles was written in consequence of the great interest that was shown in the first series; and the third series followed another letter to *The Times* from the same clergyman. When Christian ministers take to writing to Jewish newspapers for the purpose of furthering their proselytizing schemes, it is time to repel their attacks.

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of an army to buy up the statesmen of another country, or to foster treason and rebellion among the soldiers of another state, with which their own might be at variance. All work of this kind is held to be treacherous, and disgraceful both to the seducers and the seduced; and honorable men find no excuse for it. And it is this kind of work that Christian ministers are doing when they try to procure the conversion of Jews to Christianity.

For, as they know full well, the Israelites are not the witnesses of Jesus Christ, nor of the Holy Spirit; they are the witnesses of the Eternal. "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Eternal, and My servant whom I have chosen, in order that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He; before Me there was no god formed, and after Me there will be none. I, even I, am the Eternal, and beside Me there is no saviour."¹ These words were addressed by the Eternal to the children of Israel; on them has been laid the charge of testifying to the world that He, the Holy One of Israel, is the Only God, and the Only Saviour; and Christians are trying to teach the Jews to be disloyal to God, faithless to their mission, and traitors to the human race, when they endeavor to convert them to the worship of other gods and another saviour than the Eternal alone.

Some other simple points can be suggested for the consideration of our Christian friends. When a man looks for witnesses who will prove the truth of what he desires to establish, he chooses those who will give the kind of evidence he wants; he will not select those who he knows will give contrary testimony. If our Christian brethren believe in the omniscience and prescience of

¹ Isaiah xliiii. 10, 11.

the Almighty, they must admit that He knew what evidence the Jews would offer concerning Him, and what the Christians; and if the Christian theory of an association of three gods in the Godhead be the truth which the Eternal wished to convey to mankind, then it must be confessed that He acted with less than human prudence and foresight in choosing the people of Israel to be His witnesses. He should, in such case, have selected our Christian friends for that office. That He did not do so, but chose the Jews, is proof that the latter, and not the Christians, are possessed of the knowledge and give the evidence that the Almighty requires to have placed before men.

The necessity that our Christian brethren feel themselves under, of professing that they believe in One God only, carries with it the condemnation of their doctrine of an association of three persons in the Godhead. For, if it be true that the Godhead is composed of three Divine Beings, each of whom is distinguishable from the other two, then it is quite unnecessary for Christians to pretend that they believe in One God, and only One. Assuming the existence of three Divine Beings, each of whom has an individuality of his own, there can be no sin or idolatry in worshipping them as three distinct gods. And if the Christian doctrine of a union of three persons in the Godhead be not true,—if there be in reality but One Being who is God,—then the same sin of idolatry exists, and in the same degree, whether our Christian brethren worship the three persons of their Trinity as three separate and distinct gods, or with an attempt at deception under the fiction and guise of One God; for their calling those three persons One God is nothing else

than a mere shift or artifice that does not alter the essential fact that our Christian friends do believe in and worship, as God, other persons than the Eternal alone.

Christians calling their three gods One God has never had the effect of deceiving the Jewish people; do our Christian brethren believe that they can thereby impose on the intelligence of the Almighty? Even the illiterate camel-driver of Mecca was not deluded by so hollow a pretence; and when he founded a new religion, he swept away Christian as well as pagan idolatry. If Christian belief in and worship of three gods can be justified by the expedient of calling them One God, then every form of polytheism can be similarly vindicated and excused.

However difficult it may be for a simple and obvious religious truth to penetrate the Christian mind, the Jews do not require to be told that the declarations made by the Eternal, that beside Himself there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and none else, are absolute denials by Him of the existence of any other god or any other saviour than Himself alone, and are therefore directly opposed to the trinitarian doctrine of Christianity; and that, whatever may be the meaning of those passages in the Hebrew Bible on which our Christian friends rely for proof of the truth of that doctrine, they cannot possibly be susceptible of the interpretation that Christians give them. These are points that are elementary in their character, and only require to be stated in order to compel the instant conviction of their truth.

The declarations made by the Almighty, that beside Himself there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and none else, are so absolutely fatal to the Christian case, and put it so completely out of court, that, to every

kind of question and argument concerning the alleged divinity of the second and third persons of the Christian Trinity that may be put or addressed by any Christian Evangelist to a Jew, it is sufficient for the latter to reply that the Eternal has declared that beside Himself there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and no one else. Until our Christian friends take the ground, and show themselves to establish, that the Eternal God of Israel did not make those declarations, and that the Hebrew Scriptures are in error in attributing them to Him, no other answer from an Israelite is necessary to prove the utter falsity of the Christian doctrine of a Trinity.

The book concludes with a lecture that was delivered by the writer to the Young People's Society of *Shaar Hashomayim* of Montreal.

L. A. H.

MONTREAL, December, 1905 (5666).

From *The Jewish Times*, Montreal,

February 2, 1900.

IN this number we begin the publication of a paper by Mr. Lewis A. Hart, of this city, on a subject which has been attracting considerable attention of late. Christian zeal for the conversion of Jews, which persists in the face of continuous and disheartening failure, appears to the Jewish mind a most extraordinary exhibition of human credulity and obstinacy. Neither seeking nor desiring converts to their own faith, asking only to be allowed to worship the God of their fathers in their own way, free from interference and molestation, believing that good men of all nations will share in the felicity of the Eternal, Jews are at a loss to understand the proselytizing fervor of Christian conversionists toward them. Perhaps if there were not so many old women of both sexes belonging to the Protestant sects who subscribe with unflinching generosity to the fund for the conversion of the Jews, there would be little or none of this particular kind of missionary zeal. But giving the conversionists credit for sincerity in their belief that they possess the truth and are by conscience compelled to make it known to others, the best way to meet their attacks is that taken by Mr. Hart. In a calm, logical, courteous manner he surveys the field of disputation, less as a polemic disquisition than as a scientifically critical examination of the grounds of attack. We have never read a more able paper on this much debated subject, and recommend it to the careful study of the members of the Protestant Ministerial Association.

ON CHRISTIAN ATTEMPTS TO CONVERT JEWS

I.

To the Editor of The Jewish Times:

IN your issue of the 24th November¹ there appeared a letter from the Rev. G. Osborne Troop, in which he stated: "The intelligent Christian has no idea of converting the Jew into a Christian. Our one sincere desire is, if possible, to persuade the Jews to see in Jesus the Messiah of their own Sacred Scriptures."

If the intelligent Christian has no idea of converting the Jew into a Christian, then why should he desire, if possible, to persuade the Jews to see in Jesus the Messiah of their own Sacred Scriptures? What difference is there, other than one in phraseology, between converting the Jew into a Christian, and persuading him to see in Jesus the Messiah of his Scriptures? The statement of the reverend gentleman is exquisite in its simplicity, or in its dexterity, accordingly as we may regard it. But even supposing, for the sake of argument, that the Jews could by any possibility see in Jesus the Messiah of their own Sacred Scriptures, that circumstance would not furnish them with any justification for accepting him as their Lord or their Saviour. Even supposing further, for the sake of argument, that the Christian theory be

true, that Jesus was the Son of God, even that circumstance would not furnish the Jews with any more justification for worshipping Jesus than would the fact that the Prince of Wales is the son of Queen Victoria justify us in swearing allegiance to the Prince during the Queen's lifetime. And yet the Prince is, without question, Her Majesty's son, and the heir to the throne. But while the Queen lives, our fealty is due to her alone; and in the same way that any one who sought to induce Her Majesty's subjects to swear allegiance to the Prince would be guilty of treason to the Queen, so are those Christians who seek to induce the Jews to worship Jesus as their Lord and Saviour guilty of treason and rebellion against the God who declared from amidst the thunders and lightnings of Mount Sinai, "I am the Eternal thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before me."¹

Possibly the Rev. Mr. Troop was troubled by a consciousness of this indisputable truth, conflicting with his zeal as an evangelist, when he wrote that the intelligent Christian has no idea of converting the Jew into a Christian.

In endeavoring to procure the conversion of Jews to Christianity—whether it be so called, or whether it be termed Jewish Evangelization, or persuading the Jews to see in Jesus the Messiah of their Scriptures—Christians put themselves into a very peculiar position. For they cannot pretend that the Jews worship a false or an inferior God; they have to admit that the God worshipped by the Jews is a true and the Supreme God; they even profess that they themselves worship the same God; and yet, because they claim that there is another

¹ Exod. xx. 2, 3.

God, they want the Jews to believe in and worship, and to place their every hope of salvation in, that other doubtful God whom the Christians call the "Lord Jesus Christ," "God the Son," their "Saviour." Surely, if Jesus were a God, and if the Almighty had intended that the people of Israel should worship Jesus as their God, their Lord and their Saviour, He would have said so in language as plain and unmistakable as that of any of the Ten Commandments; in words so plain that there could be no debate and no possibility of mistake about them. In a matter of such supreme importance as the salvation of souls, surely the Almighty would have instructed the Israelites, His chosen people and His witnesses, in a manner as clear and precise—nay, in a manner even more precise and clear than He used in matters pertaining to their moral and material welfare. We Jews believe that God did so direct us, and in words that even a child could understand.

What did the Almighty command?

"I am the Eternal thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."¹ "I am the Eternal your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the Eternal your God."² "I am the Eternal thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour."³ "I, even I, am the Eternal; and besides Me there is no saviour."⁴ "Thus saith the Eternal, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Eternal of Hosts, I am the first, and I am the last; and besides Me there is no god."⁵ "I am the Eternal, and there is none else,

¹ Exod. xx. 2, 3.

² Numb. xv. 41.

³ Isaiah xliii. 3.

⁴ Isaiah xliii. 11.

⁵ *Ibid.*, xlv. 6.

there is no god besides Me; I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me; that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the West, that there is none besides Me; I am the Eternal, and there is none else.”¹ “Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together; who hath declared this from ancient time? Who hath told it from that time? Have not I the Eternal? And there is no god else besides Me; a just God, and a Saviour; there is none besides Me.”² “Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.”³ “I am the Eternal thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but Me; for there is no saviour besides Me.”^{4, 5}

There is no getting away from these commands; they are clear and positive declarations; there is no doubt about them, and from them no second meaning can be drawn; to pretend to misunderstand their import would be to convict ourselves of imbecility or of rank infidelity; and they are repeated over and over again, throughout the whole of the Old Testament, by all the prophets, from Moses to Malachi.

¹ Isaiah xlv. 5, 6. ² *Ibid.*, 21. ³ *Ibid.*, 22. ⁴ Hosea xiii. 4.

⁵ The non-Jewish reader may be here told that in the above and in all other quotations made in this book from the Old Testament, wherever the expression “the Eternal” is employed, the word used in the Hebrew text is the Holy Name, the tetragrammaton *Yod, He, Vav, He*. The meaning of that Name is “the Eternal,” or “the Everlasting”; and in obedience to the Third Commandment, which prohibits the taking of The Name in vain, the Jews do not pronounce it as it is written, but call it “*Adonai*,” which means “Lord.” Following this Jewish custom, the Holy Name is usually rendered in English Bibles by the word LORD, its proper sense being indicated by printing it in *small capitals*. And even the name *Adonai* the Jews pronounce only when in prayer. When not in prayer, they use the word “*Adoshem*,” a name compounded of part of the word *Adonai*, and *shem*, name, or else the word “*Hashem*,” signifying “The Name,” when speaking of the Eternal.

Such is the nature of the Jewish case. On the other hand, what have the Christians to cite in their favor from the Old Testament? Not one plain, straightforward declaration. There is not a passage quoted from the Old Testament in favor of the Christian doctrine that is not wrested from the meaning given to it by the context, or that is not susceptible of another and simpler interpretation than the one ascribed to it by its Christian exponents. And yet Christians would fain have us Jews believe that they know better than we do what the Scriptures contain; they claim, in effect, that the Almighty was in error, that the Holy One of Israel is not our Saviour, that there is another Saviour beside Him, and that it was in order that Jesus Christ should be our God, our Lord, and our Saviour that the God of our fathers brought us out of the land of Egypt and selected us as His chosen people and His witnesses!

The doctrine taught by Moses to the people of Israel was not susceptible of any doubt; there was no mystery, and no double meaning about it. Hear him. "Unto thee it was shown, that thou mightest know that the Eternal He is God; there is none else beside Him."¹ "Know therefore this day, and reflect in thy heart, that the Eternal He is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else."² "Hear, O Israel, the Eternal our God, the Eternal is One."³ These statements are as plain as language can make them; and there was no intention to deceive, or to mislead, or to mystify, about them. For what said Moses? "For this commandment, which I command thee this day, is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in

¹ Deut. iv. 35.

² *Ibid.*, 39.

³ *Ibid.*, vi. 4.

heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.”¹

It is reproached by Christians against the Jews that the latter will insist upon a literal interpretation of their Scriptures. The reproach is well founded, and will continue to be so; for the Jews believe and will continue to believe that when the Almighty declared that He was the Eternal their God who had brought them out of the land of Egypt to be their God, that they should have no other god before Him, that He was their Saviour, and that beside Him there was no saviour, He meant exactly what He said. “God is not a man that He should lie; nor the son of man, that He should repent.”² The Jews further believe that when Moses declared that “the Eternal our God is One,” he meant one, and not two, or three, or twenty-three; and that when Moses declared that the Eternal He is God in the heavens above, and upon the earth beneath, and that there is none else, he meant precisely what he said.

As to the Christian method of interpreting the Old Testament, let me cite the words of a minister of the Anglican Church. In “Three Letters to the Archbishop of Canterbury,”³ by the Rev. John Oxlee, rector of Molesworth, that learned clergyman denounced, in the interests of his church:

¹ Deut. xxx. 11-14. ² Numb. xxiii. 19.

³ Published by Hatcherd & Son.

“The fanatic zeal which, in spite of reason and common sense, would cite and apply every passage—no matter whether historical, didactic, or prophetic—either to Jesus himself personally, or in support of some doctrinal tenet admitted by the church; and that to the total exclusion of the literal sense, however plain and indisputable it may seem to common understandings: this culpable bias on the part of the church doctent has never ceased to display itself during the whole interval of the Christian dispensation, from the first to the nineteenth century; so that there is scarcely a passage of any striking importance which has not been more or less perverted or misapplied, in order that faith and not truth might appear to be triumphant.”

“The law which Moses commanded us is the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.”¹ It has been committed to our charge, and we are responsible for its safe-keeping; we therefore cannot abandon it or consider it merely typical. But we do not attack the Christians on account of their interpretation of our Scriptures; we only ask that they will abstain from attempting to force their interpretation upon us. They are free to cherish their own ideas; and no Jew will interfere with them because they abide by the doctrine of the Gospels as accepted and taught them by their fathers. The mission of the Jew is not to proselytize after the manner of the Christian. But when they will attack us, when they will insult us with proposals that we forsake the religion of our fathers, when they will seek to lead us astray after gods whom our fathers have not known, when they will persist in attempting to seduce our children to adopt

¹ Deut. xxxiii. 4.

their religion, when they will organize themselves for persistent and systematic effort to accomplish these purposes—then it becomes necessary for us to remind them that we have something to say in our defence.

II.

AMONG the many fallacious opinions entertained by Christians, not the least erroneous is the belief that the doctrine of the New Testament is based upon that of the Old. Nothing could be more unfounded than such an idea. The Old Testament teaches that there is One Sole God, the Eternal, who was One Alone before the world was created, who is One Alone at the present time, and who will be One Alone to all eternity; that He Alone is our Saviour; and that there is no other being, on earth or in heaven, to whom we can apply for salvation and help but to Him, who alone is our God and our Saviour.

What does the New Testament teach? It teaches a fantastic theory, built up on a foundation of heathen mythology and philosophy, of a triumvirate of gods—for a Trinity in Unity is a palpable misnomer—whose combined efforts for the good and salvation of mankind are frustrated and set at naught by a malignant devil, the implacable enemy and tempter of the human race, into whose power Christians believe that the Almighty has delivered mankind, and from whose power they also believe that He could only redeem them by the sacrifice of His son—a sacrifice, too, that has so far been made in vain, for nearly 1900 years have elapsed since the death of Jesus, and the Christian millennium, the period

of the Devil's first imprisonment, is apparently as remote as ever.

At the time of the birth of Jesus, the Greeks, Romans, and all other nations, with one exception, believed in a number of gods and goddesses, and they also believed that their gods had children by human mothers, and that their inferior deities and historical heroes were sprung from such unions. The Jews were the exception. The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had received a knowledge of God that was incompatible with the beliefs of other nations. The Jews had been taught that "God is not a man, nor the son of man"¹; and unto them it had been shown, that they might know, "that the Eternal He is God, there is none else beside Him."² And to this day it may be said that the Jews are the only people who have been able to grasp the sublime idea of One Almighty God, beside whom there is none else.

The New Testament bears abundant witness to the fact that Jesus and other Jews of his day were influenced by the common Gentile beliefs of the time, just as there have been Jews who have been led into idolatry, and just as there are some Jews of the present day who have become converts to Christianity; and this explains how Peter and other adherents of Jesus came to claim for him a divine origin—a claim in which he, at their instigation, concurred, although he charged them, at the same time, not to say that he was Christ.³ Some of my readers will remember the case of Paulina, the wife of Saturninus, who was as noted for her modesty and virtue as for her beauty, and who was deceived by Decius Mun-

¹ Numb. xxiii. 19.

² Deut. iv. 35.

³ Matt. xvi. 20.

dus, who bribed some of the priests of the temple of Isis, and personated the god Anubis. And until Decius made it known that he had been the god, the lady was deemed by herself, her husband, and her friends to have been highly honored. So that there was nothing repugnant or incomprehensible to the public Gentile sentiment of the day in the claim of a divine origin for Jesus being made, and it came to be accepted by his followers, and Christians ever since have had to make the best of it they could. At the same time it is evident, from different passages in the New Testament, that, after her marriage, the mother of Jesus and her husband and their other children were not believers in his miraculous conception.¹ Nor could the alleged happening of another event of the kind ever now come to be believed in.

The New Testament idea of the Devil was also taken from heathen sources.

Zoroaster, the prophet of the Persians, taught that there was a Supreme Being, under whom were two angels: one of Light, who is the author of all good; and one of Darkness, who is the author of all evil. These two Angels are represented as being in a perpetual struggle with each other; where the Angel of Light prevails, good is to be found; and where the Angel of Darkness predominates, there the most is evil. This struggle is to continue to the end of the world, when there will be a day of judgment, and retribution will be rendered to all according to their works; and the Angel of Darkness and his followers will go into a world of their own, where they will suffer in darkness the punishment of their evil deeds; and the Angel of Light and his followers will also go into

¹ Mark iii. 21, 31, 32; Luke ii. 48-50; John vii. 5.

a world of their own, where they will receive in everlasting light the reward due to their good deeds.¹ The agreement of the doctrine of the New Testament with that of Zoroaster is so remarkable that we can only conclude that the Devil of the former was of Persian origin. The New Testament is also indebted to heathen philosophy for many of its other dogmas.

But, it may be asked, is there not a "Satan" mentioned in the Old Testament? Certainly, there is; but he is not the evil and malevolent being of the New Testament. In the Old Testament the term "Satan" is applied to any angel of the Lord sent upon an errand of punishment, and in the case of Job to a minister of probation rather than of punishment. The "Satan" of the Old Testament is as much the faithful servant of God as any other of His angels, and he appears in the presence of God among His other angels; just as, upon earth, a judge of a criminal court or other officer of justice will appear at the court of his sovereign.

The whole of the New Testament scheme is built upon the hypothesis that there is a powerful and malignant being, called the Devil or Satan, who is the chief of unknown myriads of other evil spirits; that he is, by the sufferance of God, the prince of this world and the author of all sin, woe, and death; that he is the tempter and tormentor of men and the tyrant of the earth; and that the Son of God, in order to deliver mankind from the vassalage of this monster, descended from heaven and purchased their ransom of the tyrant at the price of his blood. The idea of the death of Jesus being an atone-

¹ Prideaux, "Connections of the Old and the New Testament," Part 1, Book 4.

ment to God for the sins of men is a theory of the modern Christian; the primitive Christians looked upon the death of Jesus as a ransom paid by God to the Devil. To become a Christian, according to the New Testament, is to be freed from the tyranny of Satan, to turn from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan to God, and Christians therefore regard themselves as being members of the kingdom of God, and the remainder of mankind they charitably consider to belong to the kingdom of the Devil. We all have heard of the much-vaunted Christian charity; what think you of this as a specimen of it?

It is claimed by Christians that the character of Jesus, as portrayed in the New Testament, presents a perfect example of charity and forgiveness in their highest and noblest forms; and his exhortation to "Love your enemies" is quoted as one instance among many. How did Jesus say that he would behave toward those who denied him before men, that is, toward those who were not his enemies, who did not seek his harm, but who simply could not, according to the dictates of their reason and conscience, accept him as their Lord and Saviour? Did he say that he would plead for them before the Almighty, and entreat their pardon? Not at all. "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."¹ Because a man, in the exercise of such understanding as it has pleased the Almighty to give him, cannot on the evidence submitted to him accept Jesus as his Lord and Saviour, therefore will Jesus, when his turn will come, deny the offender before God, which means, according to the New Testament, the shutting of his soul out from Heaven and cast-

¹ Matt. x. 33.

ing it to all eternity with the Devil and his followers into Hell. What think you of this as another specimen of Christian charity?

I might cite from the New Testament scores of other instances in its teachings, not of charity and forgiveness, but of the very opposite, were it not my wish, as a Jew, to refrain from attacking the Christian religion, which has, without question, taught mankind more charity and forgiveness, and done more for the good of men and the glory of God, than any other religion except our own. My only desire is to remind those Christians who will persist in interfering with us in the exercise of our religion that their position is not an impregnable one, that there are many weak spots in their armor, that there are powerful and weighty arguments against them, and that while we do, like them, read and endeavor to understand the Scriptures, we cannot, like them, set the New Testament before the Old, nor drag texts of the Old Testament out of their natural order and turn them to a sense foreign to their obvious meaning. In short, I merely wish to make them understand that while they may have conscientious reasons, which we respect, for following the religion of the Gospels, so have we Jews conscientious reasons for adhering to the religion of our fathers. What our religion has been and is, we know better than they; and we require them to respect our motives and to abstain from interfering with us in the discharge of our duty toward our God. In matters of religion, as well as in matters of charity, morality, and sobriety, the Jews have nothing to learn from the Christians; but the Christians have yet a vast deal to learn from the Jews.

III.

AT the present moment I have before me a book entitled "Israel My Glory," written by the Rev. John Wilkinson, founder and director of the Mildmay Mission to the Jews. This book is an interesting one in many respects, and chiefly on account of its showing the wonderful acrobatic performances that an intelligent Christian is capable of achieving in his endeavors to make the square doctrines of the Old Testament fit into the round holes of the New. The reverend gentleman displays in this direction a mental agility that is really remarkable; and he skips from New Testament to Old and back again, picking up a text here and another there, and dovetailing them into one another, with a disregard of context and a contempt for truth that would make even Paul green with envy. And withal, without, in the controversial parts of his book, advancing one single sound argument, or quoting from the Old Testament any one passage that cannot easily be shown to have an obviously different meaning to the one he gives it. Of this peculiarity of his arguments I will show an example or two.

From a pecuniary point of view the work of the Rev. Mr. Wilkinson in trying to convert Jews appears to have had results that have been eminently satisfactory to him; and I recommend the head of the Montreal mission for the conversion of the Jews to study with zeal the 13th chapter of Mr. Wilkinson's book. It is true that the style in which this chapter is written is not altogether in accordance with the ideas generally entertained with

regard to the proper observance of the Third Commandment; but the Montreal missionary will not let this trifling objection prevent him from imitating the methods employed by Mr. Wilkinson in promoting the flow in his direction of the surplus moneys of piously minded Christians.

In the preface to his book Mr. Wilkinson states that there is scarcely anything that humbles him to the dust more than his very limited acquaintance with the Word of God; and upon this humble avowal it appears from the reviews of the book published at the end of it that "The Christian" editorially commented, "This is how a man instructed of God must ever feel, and should ever speak." Mr. Wilkinson must have himself had a profound conviction that he was so instructed, for he proceeds with the utmost assurance and to his own entire satisfaction to prove that he understands fully the whole scheme of salvation; and he explains what the Almighty meant, and what He did not mean, when He is to be believed, and when He is not to be believed; and he shows, also to his own satisfaction, that the Jews know nothing about their Scriptures, and nothing about their religion, while he knows everything concerning both, and what their religion ought to be.

As Mr. Wilkinson appears, from the comments of the Christian press and clergymen published at the end of his book, to be a distinguished type of the intelligent kind of Christians who are so terribly exercised about the blindness, perversity, and unbelief of the Jews, and the utter hopelessness of their chance of salvation except as converts to Christianity, and the necessity of their conversion—and as his arguments are those of the class of

Christians to which he belongs, and are put forward in their strongest light—I may be excused for devoting a little attention to his methods of reasoning.

In the preface to his book he states that “the principle adopted in quoting Scripture to prove anything, past or future, is simply to let the Word of God mean what He says; that is, if the plain and obvious sense make good sense, seek no other sense.” To this principle, as applicable to the Old Testament, no Jew will take exception; let us see how our Christian friend puts it in practice.

Of the first Commandment, delivered by God Himself from Mount Sinai, he takes no notice. Of the other commands of the Almighty that I have quoted, such as, “I am the Eternal your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God”¹; “I am the Eternal thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour”²; “I, even I, am the Eternal, and besides Me there is no saviour”³; “I am the first, and I am the last, and besides Me there is no god”⁴—of passages like these, that are repeated almost without end throughout the whole of the Old Testament, our Christian friend also takes no notice; these being, apparently, unworthy of his consideration. Of the three impressive declarations made by Moses, each bearing witness to the Unity of God—“Unto thee it was shown, that thou mightest know that the Eternal He is God, there is none else beside Him”⁵; “Know therefore this day, and reflect in thy heart, that the Eternal He is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath, there is none else”⁶; “Hear, O Israel, the Eternal our God, the Eternal is One”⁷—of these three

¹ Numb. xv. 41. ² Isaiah xliii. 3. ³ *Ibid.*, i. 1. ⁴ *Ibid.*, xlv. 6.

⁵ Deut. iv. 35. ⁶ Deut. iv. 39. ⁷ *Ibid.*, vi. 4.

affirmations of the Unity of God he also ignores the first two, but bases his argument of a Trinity in Unity upon the third.

Our Christian friend says, "if the plain and obvious sense make good sense, seek no other sense."

The plain and obvious sense of "Hear, O Israel, the Eternal our God, the Eternal is one," makes good sense; as good sense, for instance, as "Hear, O English, Victoria our Queen, Victoria is One," can possibly make; and therefore our typical Christian, if he were consistent, should seek to find in this declaration of the prophet Moses no other sense than the plain and obvious sense that "the Eternal is One." But consistency is not a virtue that a Christian can afford to practise when he wants to convince himself that his system of theology is sound, or when he wants to gain a convert. Therefore our typical Christian ignores the principle of interpretation that he laid down, and seeks another sense.

He favors his readers with a series of conversations with an imaginary Jew—who is not a very good kind of Jew, it must be confessed, but is presumably the best kind of a Jew that our Christian friend could manufacture—and in the first of these conversations he points out that the Hebrew name for God, "Elohim," is in the plural, and that this Elohim speaks of himself in the plural, as in "Let us make man," etc. Hence our Christian friend deduces that God is, in the first place, a plurality in Unity. By the same process of reasoning it could be shown that Moses was a plurality, for God said to him, "See, I have made thee a god (literally, *Elohim*, gods) to Pharaoh."¹ And, again, the Almighty said to

Moses, regarding Aaron, "he shall be to thee as a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as a god" (in the Hebrew it is *Elohim*, gods).¹ Therefore Moses also must have been a plurality in unity.

The use of the plural of majesty is well known. It has been common at all times, among all nations, and in all languages. In all official documents Queen Victoria speaks and is spoken of in the plural. Therefore, according to the Christian argument, Her Majesty must also be a plurality in unity.

Our Christian friend then enters into an elaborate argument to show that the Hebrew word *echad*, "one," represents a compound and not an absolute unity, although, if you refer to any Hebrew grammar, you will find that the cardinal number "one" is expressed in Hebrew by the word *echad*; and he concludes that the words, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One," teach not only a compound unity in the Godhead, but also a Trinity in Unity; for, he says, the name of God is mentioned three times in the passage, as Adonai² (the Lord), Elohenu (our God), and Adonai (the Lord), and then the word *echad*, uniting the three in one; and thus, argues our Christian friend, we have a Trinity in Unity. By the same reasoning it must follow that the words "Hear, O English, Victoria our Queen, Victoria is one," conclusively establish the existence of a trinity in Her Majesty's person.

And it is with twaddle of this kind that Christians seek

¹ Exod. iv. 16.

² Mr. Wilkinson is here in error. The word used in the Hebrew text is not the word *Adonai*, which means Lord, but the Holy Name, which signifies the Eternal, and which the Jews pronounce *Adonai* when in prayer, and *Adoshem*, or *Hashem*, when not in prayer. (See foot-note on page 4.)

to establish from the Old Testament the existence of a Trinity in the God of Sinai, in the Holy One of Israel, who declared: "See, now, that I, even I, am He, and there is no god (literally, *Elohim*, gods) with Me."¹

I will not say that imbecility is the distinguishing characteristic of Christianity; but Christians must certainly look upon the Jews as a nation of imbeciles, if they hope, with such rubbish, to seduce us from our allegiance to the God of our fathers.

Now for a passage where our typical Christian finds that the plain and obvious sense makes good sense, and therefore seeks no other sense. We will take the passage on which Christians rely for the proof from the Old Testament of the miraculous conception of Jesus. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."² This is the translation of the verse as given in the ordinary Anglican version of the Bible.

It cannot be claimed that the plain and obvious sense of a statement that a virgin shall conceive and bear a son makes such good sense that it is wholly unnecessary to seek another sense, for the statement in itself implies a manifest contradiction; but our typical Christian regards it as being a case where no other sense should be sought, and on it he bases his theory of the miraculous conception of Jesus. Let us see with what reason.

Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekach, king of Israel, were allied against Achaz, king of Judah, and were threatening Jerusalem. Isaiah, the prophet, was sent by God to meet Achaz, and to comfort him, and to tell him that his enemies would not succeed in their designs against

¹ Deut. xxxii. 39.

² Isaiah vii. 14.

him, and to give him a sign from the Almighty that his enemies would soon be destroyed.¹ But Achaz refusing to ask for a sign, the prophet continued: "The Lord will Himself give you a sign. Behold, this young woman will conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Cream and honey shall he eat, so soon as he knoweth to refuse the evil and to choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and to choose the good, the land shall be forsaken of the kings of whom thou feelest dread."² The child named Immanuel was thus to be a sign to Achaz that he would be delivered from his enemies, the kings of Israel and Syria, before that child should know how to distinguish what was pleasant from what was unpleasant to the taste. The child named Mahershalai-chash-bas, mentioned in the next chapter, was a sign of the plundering of Damascus and Samaria by the king of Assyria before that child should be able to say "my father and my mother."³ These signs were literally fulfilled; and the prophet has himself put this interpretation beyond dispute by saying, "Behold, I and the children whom the Eternal hath given me are for signs and for tokens in Israel, from the Eternal of Hosts who dwelleth on Mount Zion."⁴ It is supposed that the "young woman" to whom the prophet alluded was his own wife, then present.

¹ Isaiah vii. 3 *et seq.* ² *Ibid.*, 14-16. ³ *Ibid.*, viii. 3, 4. ⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

IV.

THE sign given to Achaz can be compared to the signs given to Gideon ¹ and Hezekiah. ² To suppose that the prophet had the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus from a virgin mother literally and primarily in view, would be contrary to the very purpose of the sign given by him. For the sign was given in order to convince Achaz that the prophet brought him a message from the Lord, and to assure him that the two kings would not succeed in their designs against him. If the sign had reference to Jesus, how could a virgin's conceiving and bearing a son, six hundred years afterward, be a sign to Achaz that the prophet came to him with a message from God? But the statement that a particular female then present would conceive and give birth to a son within a short time, and that, before the child would be able to distinguish between what was pleasant or unpleasant to the taste, the king would be delivered from his enemies, and there would be plenty in his land, was a proper kind of a sign to give to Achaz, for it was the prediction of an event that would soon come to pass, but that yet could not with certainty be foretold except by a person divinely inspired.

Thus we see that the context is against the Christian interpretation and application of the verse in question. And as it is in this case, so it is with every passage from the Old Testament that is cited by Christians in support of their system of religion. Not only are they un-

¹ Judges vi. 36-40.

² Isaiah xxxvii. 7, 8.

able to produce from the Old Testament one plain and unmistakable declaration in favor of their theories of the Trinityship of God and the Messiahship of Jesus; but there is not one single passage or verse in the Old Testament quoted by them in support of their theological system that is not wrested from the meaning given to it by the context, or that cannot be shown to have another, simpler and more reasonable, meaning than the one they give it. The method of interpreting the Old Testament practised by our typical Christian is to take hold of any and every verse that he thinks can be of use to him, to isolate it from the context, to ignore the context and the hundreds of plain statements that deny his theories, and with the odds and ends and miscellaneous scraps that he can thus gather to try to bolster up a theological system wherein the Almighty is overshadowed by the Devil, and which gives him no sense of security unless he can induce some apostate or weak-kneed Jew to agree or pretend to agree with him. The whole thing would be inconceivable, were it not so pitifully true.

Imagine, if you can, any Englishman believing that the words, "Hear, O English, Victoria, our Queen, Victoria is one," mean or are intended to mean that Her Majesty is a trinity; and yet we Jews are asked by Christians to believe that the parallel words, "Hear, O Israel, the Eternal, our God, the Eternal is One," mean and are intended to mean that the Almighty is a Trinity. It is as impossible for the Jew to believe the latter as it is for the Englishman to admit the former. The Englishman knows that his queen is a unity, and not a plurality nor a trinity; and unto the Israelite it has been shown,¹ that

¹ Deut. iv. 35, 39.

he may know, that the Eternal is a Unity, and not a Plurality nor a Trinity. And when the Almighty shall see fit, the same truth will be shown to the Christians and to all other Gentiles, so that they also will know that God is One Alone, and besides Him there is none else.

What enlightened judge would listen to any advocate who, in a court of justice, would pervert and misapply his legal texts and authorities in the way in which Christians pervert and misapply their quotations from the Old Testament? What Christian would intrust any suit, no matter how trifling in importance, to any lawyer whose arguments were characterized by ridiculous reasonings, by perversions and misapplications of texts, by wilful disregard of context, and by an ignoring of hundreds of formal declarations establishing the very contrary to his pretensions? And yet, what Christians would not do in the most trifling of worldly matters, that very thing they do, and want the Jews to do, in that which is of the supremest importance, their obedience and their duty to God.

It is utterly incomprehensible to an Israelite how any Christian, having before him the fear of God, having in him any reverence for the Almighty, could ascribe to Him the conduct with which He is charged by the New Testament. What would be thought of the conduct of an earthly king who should seek out from among his subjects a virgin of such superior excellence as to be deemed worthy of the high honor of being the mother of his only son, of the son with whom he would share his throne and to whom he would delegate his authority over his subjects, and make that virgin by *force majeure* the mother of his son; and then hand her over to one of the

most lowly among his subjects; let her marry this poor man as though it were for the purpose of making her an "honest woman" in the eyes of her neighbors; abandon her and his son, her husband and her children, to all the trials and vicissitudes of a life among the poor and needy; and, finally, to appease a malignant enemy like the Devil, deliver up his son to die a shameful and agonizing death? What would be thought of an earthly king who should do such things; and who, having the power to rescue, should remain deaf to the last despairing cry wrung from his son in his dying agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"¹ And it is conduct of this kind, that would be deemed disgraceful in any king, shameful in any man, that Christians ascribe to the King of Kings, to the Holy One of Israel! To the Jew the very idea of this is blasphemous.

If Jesus were God, one of a so-called Trinity in Unity, then it must have been to himself, as one with God, that his prayer, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" was addressed. And since it is manifestly absurd to suppose that he would, under such circumstances, pray to himself, and appeal to himself to come to his own rescue, and reproach himself for having forsaken himself, therefore his own prayer is a proof that he was not God. "God is not a man, nor the son of man."² Jesus himself bore evidence to the unity of God. When he was asked, Which is the first commandment of all? he answered, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."³ This formal acknowledgment by Jesus of the Unity of God is one of

¹ Matt. xxvii. 46.

² Numb. xxiii. 19.

³ Mark xii. 29.

those embarrassing declarations that the typical Christian finds it convenient to ignore.

According to the New Testament theory, God had a Son, who was a part of the Godhead, and who came down from Heaven and inhabited for a time the person of the Virgin Mary. Now, how could a woman who bore God within her, who was thus possessed by God, whose entire being must have been purified and spiritualized to a degree that the mind of man cannot realize, who must in consequence have become so infused with the nature of God as to be inferior in purity, holiness, and other Divine attributes only to God Himself—how could such a woman endure the thought of marriage with a man, and marry a man, and become the mother of his children? Such a woman should have been translated to Heaven. And since all Christians believe, or profess to believe, in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, then are the Roman Catholics, who worship her and pay her divine homage, far more consistent Christians than are the Protestants, who treat her with as little reverence and respect as Jesus did. For Jesus denied himself to her, his mother, when she went to see him.¹ His was a very poor example to set of obedience to the Fifth Commandment. We all know what the Bible says about him “who lightly esteemeth his father or his mother.”²

¹ Matt. xii. 46-50; Mark iii. 31-35.

² Deut. xxvii. 16.

V.

ANOTHER of the many erroneous ideas entertained by Christians is the belief that the New Testament has as much claim to authenticity and to be regarded as the Word of God as the Jewish Scriptures have. But, if the New Testament be the Word of God, how comes it that there are so many errors and contradictions in it?

For instance: We read in the Gospel of John that Jesus said to the Jews: "And the Father Himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. *Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape.*"¹ But in the Pentateuch we read: "And the Eternal said unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen *that I have talked with you from Heaven.*"² And again, "Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, *as thou hast heard, and live?*"³

In one Gospel Jesus says: "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father"⁴; and in another he says: "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but One, that is, God."⁵

According to the New Testament, Abraham came "out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charan; and from thence, *when his father was dead*, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell."⁶ But we learn from Genesis that Terah was seventy years old when Abraham was born; that Terah lived two hundred and five years, and died in Charan; and that Abra-

¹ John v. 37. ² Exod. xx. 22. ³ Deut. iv. 12, 33, 36; v. 23-26.

⁴ John v. 23. ⁵ Luke xviii. 19. ⁶ Acts vii. 4.

ham was seventy-five years old when he left Charan.¹ Therefore Terah must have lived sixty years after the departure of Abraham.

We are also told in the New Testament that Jacob, after his death, was "carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem."² But Jacob was buried in Hebron, in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham had bought from Ephron the Hittite.³ It was Jacob who bought a piece of land from Hamor, Shechem's father, and built an altar there.⁴ The New Testament has got mixed up over the two transactions.

Matthew ⁵ makes Jesus say that John the Baptist was Elias (Elijah), the prophet, who was to precede the coming of the Messiah; but St. John, in his Gospel, denies that the Baptist was Elias.⁶

Matthew says, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."⁷ But according to the Gospel accounts of the burial and resurrection of Jesus, he was laid in the tomb on Friday night, and rose before dawn on Sunday morning. How can a period of thirty-six hours be made into three days and three nights?

The Gospels claim that Jesus was not the son of Joseph, but the son of God, while, at the same time, they rest his claim to the Messiahship on his descent, through Joseph, from King David. And in tracing the genealogy of Joseph, Matthew makes him descend from David

¹ Gen. xi. 26, 32; xii. 4. ² Acts vii. 15, 16. ³ Gen. l. 13.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xxxiii. 19. ⁵ Matt. xi. 14. ⁶ John i. 21. ⁷ Matt. xii. 40.

through Solomon and the kings of Judah ¹; while Luke makes him descend from David through Nathan ² and a line entirely different to that given by Matthew. Luke, indeed, carries the genealogy of Joseph up to the antediluvian period through Cainan, "which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God" ³; thus making out that Adam was the son of God in the same way that Seth was the son of Adam. Thus we see how Luke, or whoever wrote the Gospel that bears his name, was imbued with the ideas of heathen mythology.

It is unnecessary to continue this part of the subject any further. There are so many errors, contradictions, and absurdities contained in the New Testament that the Almighty seems to have taken care that the people of Israel, His witnesses, should have no excuse for accepting it as His revealed word.

Another delusion cherished by Christians in general is that Jesus and the Apostles must have said and done all the things attributed to them by the Gospels, that Jesus was crucified in the manner related in the Gospels, and that the Gospels were written by the Apostles whose names they bear. But none of these things can they prove; and when they set up the New Testament against the Old, the burden of proof rests upon them.

To judge from the Gospel narratives, Jesus and the Apostles must have been very prominent personages in Jerusalem and Judea, and must have played a very important part in Jewish affairs; for they are said to have cast out devils from any number of people, to have brought the dead back to life, to have restored sight to

¹ Matt. i. 6, 7.

² Luke iii. 31.

³ *Ibid.*, 38.

the blind, health to the sick, and full physical vigor to the old and decrepit, the lame and the crippled; to have been followed about by the multitude in thousands; to have preached in the Temple, the synagogues, and other public places; and to have argued with, denounced, and confounded the High Priest, the scribes, and the Pharisees. Jesus is said to have had his fame spread abroad; to have aroused the jealousy and enmity of the High Priest and other rulers and leaders among the Jews; and to have been conspired against and hunted to death by them. When Jesus was brought before Pilate, the latter is said to have called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people; to have argued the case of Jesus with them; and to have sentenced him to be crucified, only because the chief priests persuaded the multitude to demand his death, and the people became so violent in their demonstrations that Pilate, although supported and protected by the Roman garrison, was frightened by the threatening attitude of the Jews, and had, practically, to sacrifice Jesus in order to save himself. And it is related in the Gospels that when Jesus was crucified, the sun was darkened over the whole land for three hours, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, the earth did quake, the rocks were rent, the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.¹ Who the many saints were who thus rose from out of their graves is not stated, and might be difficult to state, for canonization was then as unknown among the Jews as it is now and has ever been.

¹ Matt. xxvii. 45, 51-53.

All these wonderful things are said by the Gospels to have happened; and yet the Jews who were at Jerusalem at the time appear to have known nothing about them; and the Jews who were in Rome and other cities appear to have heard nothing about them from their friends and correspondents in Jerusalem and Judea. The Romans appear to have known nothing about them. For there is no Jewish account of them; no heathen historian of the day mentions them; and there is no record and no evidence of Jesus having been crucified, and of the great wonders attending his crucifixion having occurred, save and except the Gospels themselves.

Not only have we no reason to believe that Jesus was put to death, or that the Jews had any hand in his death; but we have every reason to believe the contrary. For if Jesus had been crucified in the manner related in the Gospels, and if his death had been brought about by the High Priest and other leaders among the Jews, and had been attended by the wonderful events said to have accompanied it, these things must have been known to some of the learned Jews of the period, and, among others, to the Jewish historian Josephus. He, indeed, must have known more of the doings and death of Jesus, if they were such as described in the Gospels, than any one who came after him; but he takes no notice of them at all; for the passage in Josephus relating to Jesus is admitted to be a pious fraud of the church interpolated at a later time. That it could not have been written by Josephus will be evident to any one who will read the remainder of the chapter in which it occurs; and whoever inserted it in that particular chapter must have been possessed of a keen sense of humor, or else he would

have put it in a more suitable place. And although Josephus does not spare Herod by concealing any of his misdeeds, yet he makes no allusion to the extraordinary cruelty charged against him by the Gospels, namely, that of ordering the slaughter of all the children at Bethlehem and in its vicinity.

It is related in the New Testament that when Paul went to Rome, he called together the chief persons among the Jews there, in order to justify to them his conduct at Jerusalem, and that they told him, "We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee."¹ It is reasonable to suppose that they had also heard nothing from Jerusalem, or from persons from there, about Jesus, and his supposed crucifixion, and the alleged wonderful events attending it; for, if they had, the circumstance would undoubtedly have been mentioned. And it is evident from the Talmud that the curiosity of the learned Jews had never been interested in Jesus and his teachings until so long after his time that reliable information about him was unobtainable.

"And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."² What a rich flavor these two verses have of the thoughts and feelings of Christians at a period long subsequent to the death of the Apostles! In what respect, it may be asked, was Jerusalem a holy city to Jesus and the Apostles? And who were the many persons who were venerated as saints by them?

¹ Acts xxviii. 21.

² Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.

It is well known that the lists of what have been considered by the Christians as canonical books have differed in different ages; and that some books now acknowledged by all Christians to be forgeries were in the second and third centuries considered as equally apostolic as those now received, and, as such, were publicly read in the Christian churches. The reason why there are not now other gospels, different and contradictory to those now received, is because the Christian sect or party which finally got the better of the other sects, and styled itself Catholic or orthodox, piously took care to burn and destroy their adversaries and their gospels with them. They likewise took care to hunt up and burn the books of the pagan adversaries of Christianity, because they were shockingly offensive to pious ears.

From the very beginning, Christians have not agreed among themselves as to points of faith; and there were among them as many sects, heresies, and quarrels in the first century as there are at the present time. There is still extant a letter ascribed to Peter, written to James at Jerusalem, in which he complains bitterly of Paul, styling him a lawless man and a crafty misrepresenter of him (Peter) and his doctrine, because Paul everywhere represented Peter as being secretly of the same opinions with himself; and against this he entered his protest, and declared that he reprobated the doctrine of Paul. The Apostles themselves, so far from being considered as inspired and infallible, were frequently contradicted, thwarted, and set at naught by their own converts; and no sooner were Jesus and his Apostles off the stage than forgeries of all kinds broke in with irresistible force. Gospels, Epistles, Acts, and Revelations without num-

ber, published in the names and under the feigned authority of Jesus and his Apostles, abounded in the Christian church. All the different sects of Christians, without a known exception, altered, interpolated, and without scruple garbled their different copies of their various and discordant gospels in order to adapt them to their jarring and whimsical philosophical notions. Celsus accuses them of this, and they accused each other.

VI.

NOBODY knows where, when, or by whom the four Gospels now extant were written; and they were not known or heard of before the middle of the second century, that is, nearly a hundred years after the Apostles were dead. The Jewish Christians, the disciples of the twelve Apostles, never received, but rejected every individual book of the present New Testament; and they held in especial abomination the writings of Paul, whom they called an apostate. The facts recorded in these books were nowhere so little believed as in Judea, among the people in whose sight they are said to have been wrought, and where they should, if true, have met with the most credence. And the number of Jewish Christians dwindled so very rapidly that, had it not been for the Gentile converts, Christianity would have perished in its cradle.

It is said that several sects of Christians in the first century, in the apostolic era, as the Basildeans, for example, denied that Jesus had been crucified; and that the author of the Gospel of Thomas also denied it. It is

also said that the doctrine of the immaculate conception was borrowed from the Koran of the Mahometans. Certain it is that, as late as the twelfth century, the immaculate conception was condemned by St. Bernard as a presumptuous novelty.¹

As an instance of the little value that is attached by Christians themselves to the New Testament, I may refer to the arguments used by the Rev. Father Younan, who has recently been holding a mission in this city² for the gathering in of Protestants to the Roman Catholic church; a work that appears to have aroused much indignation among the members of the Protestant Ministerial Association, who do not like being done by as they do to others. In one of our city newspapers Father Younan is reported to have said, with regard to the New Testament, that it is not the authority, but only a part of the teaching; that the teaching authority is vested in the church, and not in the New Testament; that the latter only possesses the authority that has been given to it by the church; that it was the church of Rome which decided what part of the Christian writings should be accepted as canonical and incorporated in the New Testament; that the church of Rome was the first custodian of these writings; that they belonged to the church of Rome exclusively in the early ages of the Christian faith; that they did not even exist in a collected form until the fourth, and were never circulated until the fourteenth century; and that the teaching of the church is of higher authority than the New Testament.

Semler, after spending years in the study of ecclesi-

¹ Gibbon's "Rome," vol. 5, p. 42 (Bohn, 1854).

² Montreal. This article was published in *The Jewish Times* in April, 1900.

astical history and antiquities, came to the conclusion that, except the Gospel and the Revelation of John, the whole New Testament was a collection of forgeries written by the partisans of the different parties in the early Christian church, and entitled apostolic in order the better to answer their purpose.

Evanson, in his work on "The Dissonance of the Four Evangelists," asserts the spuriousness of the Gospel of John, which Semler spared in the general wreck he made of the authenticity of the other books of the New Testament. As Semler excepted the Gospel of John only, so Evanson excepted the Gospel of Luke only, from the charge of spuriousness; though he says that it is grossly corrupted and interpolated.

English, in his book on "The Grounds of Christianity," comes to the conclusion "that the New Testament can neither subsist with the Old Testament nor without it; and that the New Testament system was built first upon a mistake, and afterward buttressed up with forged and apocryphal documents."¹ And English thus sums up his examination of the claims of Jesus to the Messiahship of the Old Testament:

"Indeed, nothing appears to be more dissimilar than the character of the Messiah as given by the Hebrew prophets, and that of Jesus of Nazareth. It seems scarcely credible that a man who, though amiable and virtuous, yet lived in a low state, was poor, living upon alms, without wealth, and without power; and who, though by misfortune, died the death of a malefactor, crucified between two robbers—a death exactly parallel with being hanged at the public gallows in the pres-

¹ P. 99.

ent day—should ever be taken for that mighty prince, that universal potentate and benefactor of the human race, foretold in the splendid language of the prophets of the Old Testament.”¹

It is not necessary to enter into any discussion of the claims of Jesus to the Messiahship of the Old Testament. During the century preceding the destruction of the second Temple, the depressed condition of the Jews under the Romans naturally excited a desire among them to regain their liberty; and this led the impatient and weak-minded to grasp at every chance, however trifling, that seemed to promise relief. As a consequence, the land fairly swarmed with false prophets and pretended Messiahs; some of whom created a great stir among the Jews, and drew great numbers after them, and were supported by force of arms. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were slaughtered by the Romans on account of these various pretenders. Josephus has noticed some of them. So that, so far as the circumstances and the feelings of the Jews were concerned, the time was a most favorable one for the success of Jesus as a claimant to the Messiahship; and yet we are told in the New Testament that his claims were so laughed at and ridiculed by the Jews that the Apostles lost their tempers, shook their garments, and told the Jews that henceforth they would go to the Gentiles. We can well understand and believe this. For although Christian Evangelists of the present day try to comfort themselves with the delusion that Moses taught the doctrine of the Trinityship of God, yet we, who know differently, can well understand how the Jews of any and every age would

¹ P. 14.

ridicule the claims of any man who should pretend to be the son of their God, of the Holy One of Israel. If these worthy Christians would only exercise in matters of religion a little of the excellent common sense that distinguishes them in their business affairs, they would see for themselves that the fact that the Jews of 1,900 years ago laughed at the claims of Jesus to be the son of God—to be God the Son—is conclusive proof that the Jews of that time held the same belief of the Unity of God that the Jews of the present day do.

Christian Evangelists have been told, in tracts that have been written for their comfort by other Christian Evangelists, that modern Judaism is not Mosaism, but Rabbinism; that is, that the modern Jews, under the influence of their rabbis, have come to believe in the absolute Unity of God, but that Moses taught the Jews of olden time that God was a Trinity. The Evangelists have been told in these Christian tracts that the old Jewish doctrine was changed by the rabbis during the Middle Ages, as coming from a corrupt and persecuting Christianity; and that Moses Maimonides gave an absolute sense to the Unity of the Godhead which had, before then, been accepted by the Jews in the compound sense of a Trinity in Unity. Well, if this be so, how came it that the Jews of 1,900 years ago laughed at and rejected the claims of Jesus to the Messiahship, while they followed and supported by force of arms so many other pretenders? It was simply because Jesus pretended, or allowed it to be claimed for him, that he was the Son of God, that he was God the Son; while the fundamental article of the Jewish Religion was, then as now, and as it has

ever been, that the Eternal is One Alone, and besides Him there is none else.

Josephus was almost contemporary with Jesus, and he wrote, "Moses delivers the doctrine of ONE GOD, uncreated, eternal, unchangeable, infinitely glorious, and incomprehensible, but through His works."

The prayer-books of the orthodox Jews date back to the time of the Babylonian captivity. They were composed by Ezra and the men of the "Great Assembly," the most learned and celebrated men of that age, among whom were the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and Daniel, besides many others of scarcely less note. The form of prayers they then constructed has ever since continued in use by all Israelites; and these prayers teach us the absolute Unity of God. Christian Evangelists may therefore form some idea of the amount of nonsense they talk when they undertake to tell us that the Jews in the time of Christ and before then believed in the doctrine of the Trinityship of God; and that Modern Judaism is Rabbinism and not Mosaism.

"Do you know," wrote Rousseau, "of many Christians who have taken the pains to examine, with care, what the Jews have to say against them? If some persons have seen anything of the kind, it is in the books of Christians. A fine way, truly, to get instructed in the arguments of their adversaries."

As already mentioned, it is unnecessary to enter into any discussion of the claims of Jesus to the Messiahship of our Scriptures. We do not believe that he was the Messiah, because he possessed none of the characteristics that were to distinguish the Messiah;

and because none of the prophecies connected with the advent of the Messiah have yet been fulfilled.

It is immaterial to the people of Israel whether the narrative of the Gospels be historically true or not. It can make no difference to us whether Jesus was a prophet or not—whether he and the Apostles performed miracles, and said and did all the things attributed to them by the New Testament, or not. It is sufficient for us that the Christian religion teaches the worship of other Gods than the Eternal, the Holy One of Israel; and we have been told:

“If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he giveth thee a sign or a token; And the sign or the token come to pass, whereof he spoke unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou dost not know, and let us serve them; Then shalt thou not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or unto that dreamer of dreams; for the Eternal your God proveth you, to know whether indeed ye love the Eternal your God with all your heart and with all your soul. After the Eternal your God shall ye walk, and Him shall ye fear, and His commandments shall ye keep, and His voice shall ye obey, and Him shall ye serve, and unto Him shall ye cleave.”¹

Our Christian friends are very fond of talking about the blindness of the Jews; but what about their own blindness? For so far as regards their respective conceptions of the power, dignity, and glory of the Almighty, the vision of the Jew is as that of the eagle soaring aloft in the clear light of the noonday sun;

¹ Deut. xiii. 2-5.

while that of the Christian is as that of a mole still burrowing in the darkness of the heathen mythologies, whose gods were not even able to protect their own offspring. The Jews may be blind—they may be blind in many respects—and they are unquestionably blind when it comes to reading their Scriptures through Christian spectacles; but the light can shine brightly when they use their own eyes.

If the Jews are blind, where shall we find a word that will at all adequately express the destitution of sight exhibited by our Christian friends? What a comment on their creed is furnished by the dying words of the founder of their religion, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” What text for a sermon on the vanity of man can surpass in mournful interest that furnished by this last despairing prayer of the frail creature who would have associated himself with his Creator, and have arrogated to himself the attributes of the Eternal!

When, after the sin of the molten calf, the Almighty would have destroyed His people, because it was a stiff-necked people, and offered to make of Moses a great nation, Moses entreated Him to pardon them, and to let His presence still go among them, even because they were a stiff-necked people. A stiff-necked people could be relied on to remember the law of Moses, the servant of God, which He commanded to him in Horeb for all time; and though the sins of the Jews have been without number, yet have they returned in humility and repentance to the God of their fathers; and persuasion and persecution through thousands of years have failed to turn them from their

allegiance to their God, or shake their faith and belief in their Redeemer, or weaken their hope and reliance in the Holy One of Israel. "He is God in the heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else."¹

Our Christian friends will lose nothing, either now or hereafter, by letting the Jews work out their own salvation, and with it the salvation of all mankind, in the way they are taught by their Scriptures. Instead of attempting the vain and impossible task of converting the Jews into Christians, or even—if there be any sophistical difference between the two propositions—that of persuading the Jews to see in Jesus the Messiah of their Scriptures, rather let all intelligent Christians join with us in praying that the time will soon come when ten men of diverse languages, even ten Christian Evangelists, shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."²

¹ Deut. iv. 39.

² Zech. viii. 23.

From *The Jewish Times*, Montreal,

April 13, 1900.

WITH this issue we complete the series of able papers by Mr. Lewis A. Hart on "Christian Attempts to Convert Jews." The demand for the numbers of the paper containing these articles has gone on increasing from the start, orders coming from all parts of the Dominion and the United States. The interest awakened in the subject dealt with by Mr. Hart is not surprising, the publication having been happily timed to meet the extraordinary efforts recently put forth by the conversionists to make it appear that there is a movement among Jews toward Christianity. We are quite aware, however, that the missions to Jews in this city have been absolutely barren of results. The men who have undertaken the work are so poorly equipped in education and ability that their audacity in presuming to approach Jews with the object of inducing them to abandon their faith only received, as it merited, smiles of amusement and contempt. But we suppose we must endure the infliction. It pleases them and it does not hurt us, and we can, while enduring it, sympathize with the Protestants for whom the Catholics have opened missions, and condole with the Catholics the Protestants are trying to convert. The movement all round is exceedingly droll. But we Jews are content to let them all go their own way, our only desire being to be allowed to go our way without interference or molestation. The demand for Mr. Hart's papers is so great that he has been urged to publish them in pamphlet form, and we hope he may do so, for they deserve the widest circulation.

From *The Jewish Times*, Montreal,

November 23, 1900.

WITH the first number of our fourth volume we will begin the publication of a paper entitled "Some Questions Answered," by Mr. Lewis A. Hart, M.A., of this city. It will be remembered that Mr. Hart contributed a series of able papers to *The Jewish Times*, commencing last February and extending through several subsequent issues, on the subject of "Christian Attempts to Convert Jews." Those papers attracted considerable attention, and a Christian gentleman wrote Mr. Hart proposing certain questions. The forthcoming paper will contain the answers, and from what we know of Mr. Hart's lucid style of argument, our readers may rest assured that the answers will be complete in all respects.

SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

I.

AFTER the first part of the article on "Christian Attempts to Convert Jews," contributed by me some months ago to your columns, was published, I received a letter from a Protestant clergyman of this city, in which he propounded a number of questions.¹ It may be of interest to your readers to know what these questions were, and to hear some of the answers that may be made to them.

The first question was, "How do you reconcile your own attitude of non-interference with Gentiles in their religious opinions with the Sacred Scriptures—for example, the promise to Abraham, and the 67th Psalm? Does not God intend you to be missionaries to all nations, that the blessing of Abraham may extend to us?"

From a controversial point of view, the question asked is in many respects amusing; for it clearly means that, in the opinion of my correspondent, the Jews possess the true religion, and that he and other Gentiles are wrong in their religious beliefs; that God does intend the Jews to be missionaries for the conversion

¹ The present article was published in *The Jewish Times* at the 7th December, 1900.

of all other nations to Judaism; that the conversion of Christians and other Gentiles to Judaism is necessary in order that the blessing of Abraham may extend to them; and that our Christian friends have cause for complaint against the Jews, because we do not make converts of them to the Jewish religion. And the practical conclusion that my correspondent deduces from all this is: that since the Jews will not perform the duty that he considers to have been put upon them, of converting Gentiles to Judaism, so that the latter may participate in the blessing of Abraham, it has therefore become his duty to try to convert Jews to Christianity, so that we Israelites may share in the errors and the fate of Gentiles to¹ whom, in his opinion, the blessing is denied!

There is nothing in any of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that can be construed into any direction or instruction to them, or to their descendants, to become missionaries in the sense in which the word is usually understood and applied, namely, to become propagators of their religion among the Gentiles; nor have they ever deemed it to be their duty to do so. The three Hebrew patriarchs were important personages in their day, and were possessed of influence enough to have gained any number of converts to their religion; but Holy Writ only records their anxiety to keep themselves and their children separate and distinct from the peoples among whom they dwelt. "A prince of God thou art among us,"¹ said the children of Heth to Abraham; but even his servants, born in his house and circumcised, he ex-

¹ Gen. xxiii. 6.

cluded from participation in his worship of the Almighty. "And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder, and we will worship, and then come again to you."¹ Certainly, neither Abraham nor Isaac nor Jacob was the kind of missionary that my correspondent thinks that God intended the people of Israel to be. And when Jacob and his children went down into Egypt, the first care of Joseph was to provide that his father and his brethren should dwell by themselves in the land of Goshen, and not associate with the Egyptians. Truly, Joseph was as little of a missionary as his fathers had been.

When Moses led the children of Israel from Egypt, there went with them a mixed multitude.² This mixed multitude must have consisted of Egyptians and other strangers who had witnessed and were terrified by the signs and wonders wrought by God in the land of Egypt, and who joined themselves to the children of Israel, possibly with the idea that they would be safer with the Israelites than if they remained behind, and perhaps with the hope of sharing in the wealth that the people of Israel carried with them out of Egypt. If the Israelites were intended by God to be missionaries for the conversion of Gentiles to Judaism, —if their mission were a proselytizing one—then must the action of Moses, in permitting this mixed multitude to accompany the children of Israel in their exodus from Egypt have been pleasing to the Almighty and praiseworthy in His sight, because there was here afforded every opportunity to have made converts of a great

¹ Gen. xxii. 5.

² Exod. xii. 38.

multitude. But the contrary appears to have been the case. For when the children of Israel sinned in the matter of the golden calf, the Eternal said to Moses, "Go, get thee down; *for thy people* (not His) *which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt* (that is, those whom Moses should have left behind) hath become corrupt."¹ It was this mixed multitude which Aaron was unable to control, who said to him, "Up, make us gods, that shall go before us; for of this man Moses, who hath brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has become of him."² This same mixed multitude it was that exclaimed, "These are thy gods, O Israel, that have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."³ And it was this foreign element among them that was always stirring up the children of Israel to rebellion and sin. "And the mixed multitude that was among them felt a lustful longing; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who will give us flesh to eat?"⁴

Except for the purpose of reproaching Moses on account of the mixed multitude which he had allowed to come with him from Egypt, the Almighty had nothing to say to him about them. To them God sent no messages; and for them He gave no commands. All His messages and commands were expressly for the children of Israel. "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel." "These are the words which thou shalt speak to the children of Israel." Throughout the whole of the Mosaic law the same formula is made use of: it is always, "Speak unto the children of Israel"; and the mixed multitude

¹ Exod. xxxii. 7.² *Ibid.*, i,³ *Ibid.*, 4.⁴ Numb. xi. 4.

that was with them is continually, and apparently purposely, ignored.

There is as little in the 67th, or any other Psalm, as there is in the promises to Abraham, that can be regarded as an instruction to the children of Israel to be missionaries for the conversion of Gentiles to Judaism. King David was a powerful monarch; throughout the whole of the Promised Land—from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, from Mount Lebanon to Egypt—his will was law; he was able to have converted millions of men to Judaism, had he been disposed or considered it his duty to do so; but the Bible does not record one instance of his having made, or of his attempting to make, a convert to the Jewish religion. That, wherever his rule extended, he put down idolatry and enforced the observance of the seven precepts of the sons of Noah, may be taken for granted, for the Mosaic law commanded him to do so; but this was a different thing from making converts to Judaism. The religious zeal and fervor of the royal Psalmist cannot be questioned; had he been a Christian or a Mahometan ruler, he would undoubtedly have imposed his religion on the nations whom he subjected to his sway; but, being a son of Israel, he knew that God had appointed His people to be a nation separate and distinct from the other families of the earth, and, unlike our Christian friends, he sought not to alter what the wisdom of the Almighty, for a purpose beneficent to mankind, had decreed. “Then went King David in, and sat down before the Eternal, and he said, . . . Therefore art Thou great, O Eternal God; for there is none like Thee, *and there*

is no God besides Thee, in accordance with all that we have heard with our ears. And who is like Thy people, like Israel, the only nation on the earth which God went to redeem for Himself as a people, and to acquire for Himself a name, and to do for you this great deed, and fearful things for thy land, to drive out, from before Thy people which Thou hast redeemed for Thyself from Egypt, nations and their gods? For Thou hast established for Thyself Thy people Israel as a people unto Thee forever; and Thou, O Eternal, art indeed become their God. . . . And let Thy name be magnified unto everlasting, that men may say, The Eternal of Hosts is the God over Israel; and may the house of Thy servant David be established before Thee.”¹

King Solomon was another powerful monarch, and the wisest of men. In his earlier manhood, while he was still faithful to the God of his fathers, he also might have made millions of converts to Judaism, had he conceived it to be his duty to do so; but it evidently never occurred to him, any more than it did to King David, that God intended him to be a missionary to the surrounding nations, for there is no instance mentioned in the Bible of his making, or attempting to make, any converts to Judaism. When King Solomon dedicated the Temple, he prayed for the strangers, but he did not pray for their conversion to Judaism; nor is there anything in his prayer that can tend to the conclusion that he considered the conversion of the strangers to Judaism a necessary preliminary to their obtaining favor in the sight of the Eternal. His

¹ 2 Sam. vii. 18, 22-24, 26.

prayer was: "But also to the stranger, who is not of Thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far-off country for the sake of Thy name; For they will hear of Thy great name, and of Thy strong hand, and of Thy outstretched arm; when he will come and pray at this house: Mayst Thou listen in Heaven, the place of Thy dwelling, and do according to all that the stranger will call on Thee for; in order that all the nations of the earth may know Thy name, to fear Thee, as do Thy people Israel; and that they may understand that this house, which I have built, is called by Thy name." ¹ How markedly the tolerant and humane spirit of Judaism with regard to the stranger to the covenant, as exemplified in the prayer of King Solomon, contrasts with the contrary sentiment of Christianity, whose founder said: "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." ²

It is apparently impossible for our Christian friends to understand the Jewish position with regard to proselytizing; and the difficulty they experience in this respect is due to the narrow and illiberal teachings of their own religion.

II.

ACCORDING to the religious theory of Christians, there is a Kingdom of God, and a Kingdom of Satan; and they believe that only they themselves can belong to the Kingdom of God, and that all the remain-

¹ 1 Kings viii. 41-43.

² Matt. x. 33.

der of mankind are members of the Kingdom of Satan and doomed to everlasting punishment. And as our Christian friends do not agree among themselves as to what are the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, so therefore do they concede the possibility of salvation only to those of themselves who profess a certain form of their religion. Thus, the Roman Catholics believe that salvation can only be obtained through the profession of their own particular faith, and they do not admit that there is any salvation for Protestants; while the latter claim that salvation can only be gained through the profession of their own form of Christianity, and they do not allow that there is any salvation for Roman Catholics. The Protestants go even further than this: for they believe in the doctrine called *election of grace*, which teaches them that, from the very beginning of the world, the Almighty selected certain individuals for salvation, and predestinated them to everlasting life; and that all the rest of mankind, including even many Protestants among them, He foreordained to everlasting punishment and death. Under this doctrine of *election of grace*, the Protestants are required to believe that it is not enough for the salvation of a man that he should be born, baptized, and brought up in the Protestant faith; but he must also, through profession of his belief in Jesus, have experienced a certain change of heart and disposition, resulting in a reformation of his manner of life, the abandonment of all habits considered evil, and the entire submission of his will to what is supposed to be that of Jesus. And as, in the opinion of many of those Protestants who deem themselves

included among *the elect*, some of the ordinary social customs of the day, such as drinking wine, smoking tobacco, dancing, theatre-going, etc., are incompatible with the state of conversion to religion, it results that, according to their belief, all those of their own coreligionists who indulge, even temperately, in any of these social habits are also excluded from the Kingdom of God, and are under the power of the Devil, no matter how exemplary in all other respects their lives may be.

Toward the end of last winter¹ there appeared a paragraph in the *Daily Witness* of this city² which announced that the Rev. Merton Smith, of Chicago, would relate the story of his life and conversion in Emmanuel Church on the following Sunday evening; and the heading of this simple announcement was curiously symbolic of the bigotry and intolerance that are the essential characteristics of Christianity, and are to be found at the heart of every professing Christian. The heading, in the usual large type, was, "FROM THE POWER OF SATAN TO GOD."

Being trained up to take these very narrow views of the mercy and grace of the Almighty, it is not to be wondered at that our Christian friends should find it impossible to either believe in or understand the broader teachings and more tolerant doctrines of the Jewish religion. Because it is with them an article of faith that there is no salvation outside of the pale of Christianity, they conclude that the Jews must of necessity hold a similar doctrine with regard to their

¹ This article was published in *The Jewish Times* of the 21st December, 1900.

² Montreal.

religion; and that, because the Jews do not seek to make converts to Judaism, they must be recreant to their duty, and either indifferent about the salvation of Gentiles or else selfishly desirous of confining to themselves the happiness of the future life. And it will no doubt be novel and quite incredible to many of our Christian friends to be told that the teaching of the Jewish religion is, that it is easier for the Gentile to merit salvation than it is for the Jew, because God requires more from the latter than He does from the former.

According to Jewish teaching, all men are required to observe what we call the *Noachite precepts*, because they are obligatory on all the sons of Noah. These Noachite precepts are seven in number. The first is, not to commit idolatry; the second, not to blaspheme the name of God; the third, not to commit murder; the fourth, not to commit incest; the fifth, not to steal; the sixth, not to pervert justice; and the seventh, not to eat any part of an animal while it is yet alive. These seven precepts of the sons of Noah comprise all the commandments that, according to Jewish teaching, are obligatory upon non-Israelites; and therefore, in Jewish belief, all Gentiles who abstain from idolatry, blasphemy, murder, immorality, theft, perversion of justice, and cruelty, do all that is required of them by the Almighty, and by their service in observing these commandments render themselves as acceptable to God as the children of Israel can possibly do by their own observance of all the precepts of the Mosaic law. Hence, it is not through either indifference, uncharitableness, or selfishness that the Jews do not seek to make converts to Juda-

ism; but because they have never been taught, and do not believe, that the conversion of Gentiles to Judaism is at all essential to their salvation.

The people of Israel believe that God requires more from them than He does from the other nations of the earth, because they entered into a covenant with Him at Mount Sinai to perform all the words of His law. "And Moses went up unto God, and the Eternal called unto him from the Mount, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have yourselves seen what I have done unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now, therefore, if you will truly obey My voice, and keep My covenant, then shall ye be unto Me a peculiar treasure above all nations; for all the earth is Mine. And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation; these are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came, and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the Eternal had commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Eternal hath spoken will we do; and Moses returned the words of the people unto the Eternal."¹ This covenant with the Almighty, thus entered into by our ancestors in the wilderness of Sinai, is binding upon their descendants forever. "The Eternal our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Not with our fathers did the Eternal make this covenant, but with us, even us, who are here all of us alive this day."²

Having entered into this covenant with God, the

¹ Exod. xix. 3-8.

² Deut. v. 2, 3.

people of Israel are therefore bound to keep the whole of His law and commandments. But such is not the case with the rest of mankind; for the latter neither entered into the covenant nor were they called upon to do so. Jewish opinion holds that the Law of Moses, in its entirety, was made for the children of Israel, and not for the whole world; that the Israelites are obliged to observe it, but not the rest of mankind; and that if non-Israelites observe the Law of Nature, which is another name for the seven precepts of the sons of Noah, and comprises all the moral rules of the Mosaic Code, they perform all that God requires of them, and, as just mentioned, render themselves by this service as acceptable to the Almighty as the Israelites can do by theirs. Jews and non-Jews are equally subject to the moral laws; but the ceremonial laws are binding upon the Jews alone.

We therefore find that, in ancient times, there were among the Israelites two kinds of proselytes; the one, called *Proselytes of the Gate*; and the other, *Proselytes of Justice or Righteousness*. The Proselytes of the Gate were all those strangers living in the land of Israel who renounced idolatry, and became proselytes so far as to observe the seven Noachite precepts; and no Gentiles were allowed to dwell in the land, unless they became such proselytes. This was required because of the prohibition against idolatry, which was punished by death; and in order that the Israelites might not learn the evil ways of the strangers, and themselves become idolaters. Naaman, the Syrian, was a Proselyte of the Gate.¹

¹ 2 Kings v. 17, 18.

The other kind of proselytes, called *Proselytes of Righteousness or Justice*, were those strangers who voluntarily took upon themselves the observance of the whole Law of Moses; for although the Israelites did not consider this to be necessary for persons who were not of their nation, yet they never refused any who freely offered, but received all who wanted, to profess their religion. The Mosaic Law provided for such cases. For instance: "And when a stranger sojourneth with thee, and will prepare the passover to the Eternal, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and prepare it, and he shall be as one that is born in the land; but no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof."¹ When, therefore, any strangers dwelling among the Israelites wished to become proselytes to Judaism, they were initiated to it by ablution, sacrifice, and circumcision, and were thereafter admitted to all the rites, ceremonies, and privileges that were enjoyed by the Israelites themselves, with one exception: and that was, they were not permitted to marry women of Israel. To marry a daughter of Israel is what is meant by the expression "to enter into the congregation of the Lord"; and from this some nations, such as the Ammonites and the Moabites,² were forever excluded; while others, such as the Edomites and the Egyptians, were, in the third generation after becoming proselytes, not refused permission to intermarry with women of Israel³; a probation of this length of time qualifying them for a connection with the chosen people. The strictness and importance of the law against the marriages of Israelites with non-Israelites

¹ Exod. xii. 48.² Deut. xxiii. 4.³ *Ibid.*, 9.

are attested by the number of generations that had to elapse before the descendants of those who became proselytes were allowed to intermarry with Jews; and the reason for the law and its necessity have been but too fully and too sadly proved by the fulfilment of the predictions of the dreadful calamities that would overwhelm the people of Israel as a consequence of its in-fringement. Ezra¹ and Nehemiah² found in the marriages of Jews with non-Jews the fruitful cause of all the sins and consequent sufferings of the people of Israel; and they compelled all those Jews who had married strange wives, and even those who had children by such wives, to put them away. And it is very noteworthy that it was not even suggested that the conversion of these non-Jewish wives and their children to Judaism could remedy, or furnish any palliation or make any atonement for, the violation of the law of non-intermarriage of which their Jewish husbands and fathers had been guilty.

III.

AMONG their other peculiarities, our Christian friends have a remarkable faculty for forgetting that the Almighty has, for His own wise purposes, separated³ the children of Israel from the other nations of the world, "to be unto Him a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation"⁴; so that, even when they do occasionally remember this circumstance, they are unable to deduce from it the logical consequence that, in attempt-

¹ Ezra ix., x. ² Nehe. xiii. 23-30. ³ Levit. xx. 26. ⁴ Exod. xix. 6.

ing to convert the Jews to Christianity, they are not only trying to persuade the chosen people of God to be faithless and disobedient to Him, but are also endeavoring to break down the separation that the Almighty has decreed, and are setting their puny efforts against the accomplishment of His declared will. As an instance of their peculiarity in this respect, I will now make a few extracts from a book written by a Protestant clergyman who, with the usual inconsistency and blindness of his coreligionists, has devoted himself to the vain task of trying to induce Jews to forsake the God of their fathers, and to worship another than the God who commanded, "I am the Eternal thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before Me."¹

"The descendants, then, of the twelve sons of Jacob, called Israel, and who are most fitly termed Israelites, have been chosen or elected by God for some specific purpose, as the result of the infinite wisdom of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, and who has declared, 'This people have I formed for Myself, they shall show forth My praise.'²

"These children of Israel . . . as a people are separated from all others as God's own. 'Ye shall be holy unto Me: for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that ye should be Mine.'³

"Their perpetual separation is guaranteed. 'Lo, it is a people that dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.'⁴ They are also to be above all other nations in praise and honor; a chosen, holy, and peculiar people. 'For thou art a holy people

¹ Exod. xx. 2, 3. ² Isaiah xliii. 21. ³ Levit. xx. 26. ⁴ Numb. xxiii. 9.

unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth.'¹ . . .

"We have now sufficiently traced the development of the nation of Israel from the call of Abraham, through his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob, to the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob, as heads of tribes; constituting an elect, redeemed, separated, protected, preserved and honored people, with a mission of distinguished service in the interest of the human race and for the glory of the Eternal. . . .

"Israel's preservation as a distinct people is guaranteed in the simplest, clearest, and strongest language. 'Thus saith the Lord, who giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who stirreth up the sea that the waves thereof roar, the Lord of Hosts is His name: If these ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever. Thus saith the Lord: If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, then will I also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord.'² . . .

"Thus, before the original purpose of God in the blessing of all nations through Israel can be realized, the scattered tribes of Israel must become one united people and nation in the possession of their ancient inheritance. 'Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every

¹ Deut. xiv. 2.

² Jere. xxxi. 35-37.

side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations; neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.¹ . . . And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they, and their children, and their children's children forever; and David My servant shall be their prince forever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And the nations shall know that I am the Lord that sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forevermore.'²

"The simple believer in the word of the living God feels no surprise whatever that a nation originated and developed under such exceptional and miraculous circumstances, and for so divine a purpose, should have its preservation guaranteed until its mission of universal blessing has been fully accomplished. 'Judah shall abide forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.'³ 'He hath remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations.'⁴ The national election of Israel is unconditional, and the existence of the nation guaranteed to the end of time."

¹ Ezek. xxxvii. 21, 22. ² *Ibid.*, 25-28. ³ Joel iv. 20. ⁴ Ps. cv. 8.

These extracts are taken from the book called "Israel My Glory, or Israel's Mission, and Missions to Israel," written by the Rev. John Wilkinson, the founder and director of the Mildmay Mission to the Jews; and I quote them for the purpose of showing how impossible it is for a Christian to be either logical or consistent when he comes to discuss matters of religion, and particularly when he undertakes to teach the chosen people of God what their religion should be. Here we have an example of a Christian clergyman who states that it has been his life-work to study the Word of God with a special desire to understand His purpose concerning Israel; who expresses his belief that the Israelites have been chosen by God for a specific purpose—for the blessing of the human race—and for the accomplishment of that divine purpose have been separated by the Almighty from all other nations, to be unto Him a peculiar people; who admits that their separation, and their preservation as a distinct people, are guaranteed by the Almighty to the end of time; and yet this same Christian clergyman, with the moral obliquity and the intellectual blindness that are so characteristic of his class, fails to see that, in endeavoring to procure the conversion of Jews to Christianity, he is trying to break down the separation ordained by God, and is opposing His will, and trying to teach His people to disobey Him. Fortunate it is for mankind that the people of Israel have a clearer conception than have their would-be teachers, of the duty imposed upon them by the covenant made in Horeb. Unto them it has been shown, that they may know "That the Eternal

is the God in the heavens above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else.”¹

The Jewish religion differs from all others that the world has known, for it comes to us as a direct revelation from the Almighty; while all other religions have been, and are, but the inventions of men. The Jewish religion, emanating from God, does not require from the children of Israel any argument or preaching, nor any proselytizing efforts, to make its truth known to the remainder of mankind; but the followers of all other religions have been taught, as a primary duty, to use all kinds of human devices, including force and persecution, and fire and the sword, to procure the spread of their particular tenets among other people. There is not one word to be found in the law which Moses commanded to the children of Israel that directs them to become missionaries for the conversion of Gentiles to Judaism; but there are often-repeated injunctions to them to be true to their God, and to fear Him, and to keep His commandments. This is the kind of missionary that the Jews are required to be.

“See, I have taught you statutes and ordinances, just as the Eternal my God commanded me. . . . Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding before the eyes of the nations, that shall hear all these statutes, and they will say, Nothing but a wise and understanding people is this great nation.”² This is the kind of missionary work that has been given to the children of Israel to do.

“Only take heed to thyself, and guard thy soul diligently, that thou do not forget the things which thy

¹ Deut. iv. 39.

² Deut. iv. 5, 6.

eyes have seen, and that they depart not from thy heart all the days of thy life; but thou shalt make them known unto thy sons, and unto thy sons' sons. The day that thou stoodest before the Eternal thy God at Horeb, when the Eternal said unto me, Assemble for Me the people, and I will cause them to hear My words, which they shall learn, to fear Me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and which they shall teach their children."¹ This is the mission that has been given to the children of Israel.

"And now, Israel, what doth the Eternal thy God require of thee, but to fear the Eternal thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Eternal thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the Eternal, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy own good. Behold, to the Eternal thy God belong the heavens, and the heavens of heavens, and the earth with all that is thereon."² . . . For the Eternal your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who hath no regard to persons, and taketh no bribes; who executeth justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loveth the stranger, to give him food and raiment. Love ye then the stranger; for you have been strangers in the land of Egypt."³ This is the kind of missionary work that the Jews are required to do.

"After the Eternal your God shall ye walk, and Him shall ye fear, and His commandments shall ye keep, and His voice shall ye obey, and Him shall ye serve, and unto Him shall ye cleave."⁴ This is the kind of

¹ Deut. iv. 9, 10. ² *Ibid.*, x. 12-14. ³ *Ibid.*, 17-19 ⁴ *Ibid.*, xiii. 5.

missionary work that the Jews are commanded to do; and they have only to do it, and it shall come to pass "that ten men out of all the languages of the nations shall take hold—yea, they shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."¹

IV.

THE next questions were: "Who is *the Son* spoken of in the 2d Psalm? If the Messiah be David's Son, how is He his Lord (Psalm cx.)?"

We will find in these questions further instances of the peculiar way in which Christians accommodate the Jewish Scriptures to their own religious views. They ignore the hundreds of positive declarations with which the Old Testament abounds, in which the Eternal and His prophets have proclaimed His Unity, and have declared in the plainest of language and the most unequivocal of words that He is the One Eternal Being, the First and the Last—that He is our God, our Lord, our Redeemer, and our Saviour, and that besides Him there is no God, no Lord, no Redeemer, and no Saviour; but, whenever they can find in the Old Testament a verse, a word, or an expression that can by any means be twisted into the semblance of a confirmation of their theory of a plurality of Gods, they take hold of every such text, and quote it as a proof of the truth of their religion, totally regardless of every other construction of which it may with better

reason be susceptible, and without making any attempt to reconcile it with the hundreds of positive assertions of the Unity of God.

Christians apply the 2d Psalm to Jesus: and we read in the New Testament that the Apostles "lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, Thou art God. . . . Who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together, For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done."¹ Here we have the Apostles represented as praying to God, and referring in their prayer to the first two verses of the Psalm as being a prophecy by King David of the opposition of Jews and Gentiles to Jesus.

But King David was not, and never professed to be, a prophet. The prophets of his time were Samuel, Nathan, and Gad; and it was only through one or the other of these that God spoke to David. King David was no more of a prophet than was King Solomon. Nor can it be to Jesus that the Psalm refers, because "*the nations*," as it is in the original, did not rage against him; they knew nothing about him. The kings of the earth did not raise themselves up against him; for they, also, were not even aware of his existence. Neither the nations nor the kings of the earth had any

¹ Acts iv. 24-28.

hand in his alleged crucifixion; nor did they know anything about it. If Jesus were crucified, it was done by a few Roman soldiers. Nor did those persons who were concerned in his crucifixion meditate a vain thing, or form vain designs, since, according to the New Testament, they accomplished their cruel purpose. Nor did God set Jesus as king upon His holy mount of Zion, nor give him nations for his inheritance, nor the uttermost parts of the land for his possession. It is very evident, therefore, that it cannot be to Jesus, about whom David knew nothing, that the 2d Psalm refers, and it is just as evident that in it King David was speaking about himself.

Apply the Psalm to David himself, and every part of it is confirmed by history. For against King David did nations rage, and his enemies form vain designs. Against him did kings raise themselves up, and rulers take counsel together. Repeatedly did the kings of the surrounding nations, and the nobles of Israel, assemble against him. For years had he to struggle against the son of Saul and his adherents, and against the neighboring kings combined against him; and over all his enemies did he triumph. The things they meditated against him were indeed vain. David did God appoint as king upon His holy mount of Zion; and to him did God give nations for an inheritance, and for his possession the uttermost parts of the land, that is, the countries adjacent to Palestine, which formed part of the Promised Land, and were indeed obliged to submit to him.

My correspondent asks, Who is the "*son*" spoken of in the Psalm? and it is difficult to understand why

he should think it necessary to ask such a question. The writer of the Psalm announces, "The Eternal hath said *unto me*, My son art thou": and therefore it is the writer of the Psalm who is the son spoken of in it. It certainly was not Jesus who is here spoken of; for Jesus was not the writer of the Psalm, which was written more than 1,000 years before his birth. It is of himself that King David, the writer of the Psalm, announces, "The Eternal hath said *unto me*, My son art thou." The children of Israel were called by God, "My son," "My first-born," and to David, as king and representative of the people of Israel, was the appellation of *My son* most appropriately applied. "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus hath said the Eternal, My son, My first-born is Israel. And I said unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve Me; and thou refusest to let him go; so, behold, I will slay thy son, thy first-born."¹ The Israelites were also called the children of God. "Ye are the children of the Eternal your God."²

"I have found David My servant; with My holy oil have I anointed him. . . . He will call unto Me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my Salvation. Also I will appoint him My first-born, the highest among the kings of the earth."³

Solomon, also, was called by God, "My son." "He it is who shall build a house unto My name; and he shall be My son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever."⁴ "And He hath said unto me, Solomon thy

¹ Exod iv. 22, 23.² Deut. xiv. 1.³ Ps. lxxxix. 21, 27, 28.⁴ 1 Chron. xxii. 10.

son, he shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father.”¹

After King David had expressed himself, “The Eternal hath said unto me, thou art My son,” his subsequent exclamation of “Kiss the son” was natural enough; for to kiss, in the East, was an act of homage, and the passage is often rendered, “Do homage to the son.” The giving of a kiss was also considered a sign of appointing to royalty, as in the case of Samuel and Saul. “And Samuel took a flask of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Behold, it is because the Eternal hath anointed thee over His inheritance as chief.”²

“If the Messiah be David’s son, how is He his Lord?”

A question similar to this is said to have been asked by Jesus. We read in the New Testament: “While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on My right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man, from that day forth, ask him any more questions.”³ The last sentence shows us that the compilers of the Gospel ascribed to Matthew had evidently never put any of these questions, which they appear to have considered unanswerable, to a

¹ 1 Chron. xxviii. 6.

² 1 Sam. x. 1.

³ Matt. xxii. 41-46.

Jew; otherwise they would have found out that they were easily enough answered, and that there was nothing in them calculated to deter the Jews from asking Jesus further questions.

Christian theologians attach a great deal of importance to the 110th Psalm. They claim that the title of the Psalm indicates that it is one of which King David was the author; that it refers to the Messiah; and that since, in this Psalm, David honored the Messiah, who was to be his descendant, with the appellation of "My Lord," he must have considered him as a part of and One with God. They further claim that in this Psalm it is prophesied of the exalted personage whom David called "My Lord" that he was to be a ruler and "a priest forever after the order of Malkizedek"; and that, since David was a ruler but not a priest, there is therefore here implied a change in the order of the priesthood; and that the dignity and privilege of a High Priest are to be united with those of a King in the Divine person who is the subject of the Psalm, and who, in the opinion of our Christian friends, cannot be any other than Jesus, whom they claim to be the Son of God and the Messiah, as well as David's Son and Lord.

It is well known that the titles to the Psalms are not decisive as to authorship. They are of a later date than the Psalms themselves: and although they may in some cases embody reliable information, yet their value has been variously estimated. Several of the Psalms ascribed to David are supposed, from linguistic and internal evidence, not to have been composed by him; others, again, are clearly of a date subsequent to

the Babylonian Captivity. Biblical scholars therefore differ as to the number of Davidic Psalms. Delitzsch considers that 44 out of the 73 ascribed to David are by him; Ewald assigns 11 complete Psalms, and some fragments of others, to David; Hitzig makes him the author of 14; Schulz regards 17 as Davidic, and 17 others as probably by David; while Cheyne and others deny that any of the Psalms are by David. The conclusion come to by these last is probably not justifiable; but there is room for so much doubt as to the value of any of the titles to the Psalms, as indications of their authorship, that the fact of Christian theologians depending upon the correctness of their interpretation of the title to the 110th Psalm, as furnishing one of the most important proofs they can adduce from the Jewish Scriptures of the truth of their theory of a plurality of Gods, is an evidence and an admission of the utter weakness of the fundamental doctrine of their religion.

V.

THE Hebrew title to the 110th Psalm is, in the case of other Psalms, translated "A Psalm *of* David," that is, a Psalm belonging to him as author; but it does not follow that this rendering must be necessarily correct in the case of the Psalm now in question, for the Hebrew title is equally susceptible of the version, "A Psalm *to* David" or "A Psalm *for* (*i.e.*, concerning) David." The headings of other Psalms, where the same Hebrew preposition is used, are rendered in this

way: thus, the title of the 72d Psalm is translated "A Psalm *for* (*i.e.*, concerning) Solomon"; that of the 127th Psalm, "A Song of the degrees *for* Solomon"; that of the 92d Psalm, "A Psalm or Song *for* the Sabbath Day"; and the titles of the 47th, 48th, 49th, and other Psalms are rendered, "A psalm *for* the sons of Korach." So far as the grammatical construction of the Hebrew title is concerned, it may mean either "A Psalm of David" or "A Psalm *to*, or *for*, David." The subject-matter of the Psalm must be taken into consideration in order to decide the question whether it be "A Psalm *of* David" or "A Psalm *to*, or *for*, David"; and we will see that the 110th Psalm is obviously not a composition of King David, but that it was composed by some other person, as an address to him, probably on the occasion of the capture of Rabbah, the royal city of the Ammonites.

The Psalm begins with the words "The Eternal said to my lord (*Adonee*)."¹ The expression *Adonee*, "my lord," or "my master," is of very frequent occurrence in the Hebrew Bible, but nowhere is it applied to the Almighty. It is applied to Abraham by the children of Heth. "Hear us, my lord (*Adonee*); a prince of God thou art among us."² It is applied to Abraham by Ephron the Hittite. "Nay, my lord (*Adonee*), hear me; the field I give to thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it to thee."³ "My lord (*Adonee*), hearken unto me; a piece of land worth 400 shekels of silver, what is that between me and thee?"³ It is applied to Abraham by his servant. "And he said, O Eternal, the God of my master

¹ Gen. xxiii. 6.² *Ibid.*, —. 11.³ *Ibid.* —. 15.

(*Adonee*) Abraham, I pray Thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master (*Adonee*) Abraham.”¹ “And he said, Blessed be the Eternal, the God of my master (*Adonee*) Abraham, who hath not withdrawn His mercy and His truth from my master (*Adonee*); I being on the way, which the Eternal hath led me, to the house of the brethren of my master (*Adonee*).”² “And I came this day unto the well, and said, O Eternal, the God of my master (*Adonee*) Abraham, if Thou wouldst but prosper my way on which I am going.”³ “And I bowed down my head and prostrated myself before the Eternal, and blessed the Eternal God of my master (*Adonee*) Abraham, who had led me in the right way to take the daughter of the brother of my master (*Adonee*) for his son.”⁴

The expression, *Adonee*, my lord, is applied to Abraham’s servant by Rebekah. “And she said, Drink, my lord (*Adonee*); and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him to drink.”⁵ It is applied to Laban by Rachel. “And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord (*Adonee*), that I cannot rise up before thee.”⁶ It is applied to Esau by Jacob, when the latter was returning to the land of Canaan. “And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord (*Adonee*), to Esau.”⁷ “And I send now to tell my lord (*Adonee*), that I may find grace in thy eyes.”⁸ “And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, To find grace in the eyes of my lord (*Adonee*).”⁹ It

¹ Gen. xxiv. 12.² *Ibid.*, —. 27.³ *Ibid.*, xxiv. 42.⁴ *Ibid.*, —. 48.⁵ *Ibid.*, —. 18.⁶ *Ibid.*, xxxi. 35.⁷ *Ibid.*, xxxii. 4.⁸ *Ibid.*, —. 5.⁹ *Ibid.*, xxxiii. 8.

is applied by Joseph to Potiphar. "But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master (*Adonee*) troubleth himself not about what is with me in the house."¹

In the recital of the interviews between Joseph and his brethren, when the latter went down to Egypt to buy food, we find the word *Adonee*, "my lord," applied both to Joseph and his steward.

"And they said unto him, Nay, my lord (*Adonee*), thy servants are only come to buy food."² "And they came near to the man who was appointed over Joseph's house. . . . And said, Pardon, my lord (*Adonee*), we came down at the first time to buy food."³ "Is not this out of which my lord (*Adonee*) drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth?" "And they said unto him, Wherefore will my lord (*Adonee*) speak these words?" "With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, let him die; and we also will be bondmen unto my lord (*Adonee*)." "And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord (*Adonee*)?" "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants; Behold, we are servants unto my lord (*Adonee*), both we, as also he with whom the cup was found." "Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Pardon, my lord (*Adonee*), let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in the ears of my lord (*Adonee*)." "My lord (*Adonee*) asked his servants, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord (*Adonee*)." "And it came to pass when we came up to thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord (*Adonee*)." "Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the

¹ Gen. xxxix. 8.² *Ibid.*, xlii. 10.³ *Ibid.*, xliii. 20.

lad as bondman to my lord (*Adonee*); and let the lad go up with his brothers.”¹

The expression *Adonee*, “my lord,” was also applied to Moses. When Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp, Joshua said, “My lord (*Adonee*) Moses, forbid them.”² When Miriam was smitten with leprosy, Aaron said to Moses, “Alas, my lord (*Adonee*), do not, I beseech thee, account to us as sin that wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned.” “And Moses cried unto the Eternal, saying, O God! do Thou heal her, I beseech Thee.”³

“And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben said unto Moses, as followeth, thy servants will do as my lord (*Adonee*) doth command. Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle shall remain in the cities of Gilead; but thy servants will pass over, every one that is armed for the army, before the Eternal to battle, as my lord (*Adonee*) speaketh.”⁴

“And there came near the chiefs of the fathers of the family of the children of Gilead, . . . and they spoke before Moses. . . . And they said, The Eternal hath commanded my lord (*Adonee*) to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel: and my lord (*Adonee*) was commanded by the Eternal to give the inheritance of Zelophchad our brother unto his daughters.”⁵

These are but a few of the hundreds of instances in which the expression *Adonee* is used in the Hebrew Bible; and I quote them for the purpose of showing

¹ Gen. xliv. 5, 7, 9, 16, 18, 19, 20, 24, 33.

² Numb. xi. 28.

³ *Ibid.*, xii. 11, 13.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xxxii. 25-27.

⁵ *Ibid.*, xxxvi. 1, 2.

how common an expression it was, and how it was applied to all sorts and conditions of men by any one who was addressing a person of superior age, rank, or influence. It was simply a title of courtesy or of honor; and it no more indicated that the person to whom it was applied was a part of and One with God than does the expression "my lord," as applied nowadays to a nobleman, a judge, or a bishop, mean that the person so addressed or spoken of is a part of and One with the Almighty. And yet such is the material out of which the fabric of Christianity is constructed; and such are the reasons and arguments with which our Christian friends would seek to induce the Jews to disobey the God of their fathers, and to disbelieve the hundreds of plain, straightforward declarations of His Unity! Such, indeed are the flimsy reasons and arguments that Christian theologians consider so unanswerable that they have put on record in the New Testament, "And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions"!!¹

The term *Adonee*, "my lord," was applied by David to King Saul on the two occasions on which he surprised him while asleep and spared his life. When David had cut off the corner of Saul's robe, and his men would have persuaded him to kill Saul, David said to them, "Far be it from me for the sake of the Eternal that I should do this thing unto my master (*Adonee*), the anointed (*Masheach*) of the Eternal, to stretch forth my hand against him; because he is the anointed (*Masheach*) of the Eternal." "David

¹ Matt. xxii. 46.

also arose afterward, and went forth out of the cave, and called after Saul, saying, My lord (*Adonee*), the King! . . . And David said to Saul, . . . Behold, this day thy eyes have seen how that the Eternal had delivered thee to-day into my hand in the cave, and some one said that I should kill thee; but my soul felt compassion for thee; and I said, I will not stretch forth my hand against my lord (*Adonee*); because he is the anointed (*Masheach*) of the Eternal.”¹ Here we have David calling Saul his lord and the *Masheach*, that is, the Messiah or anointed, of the Almighty; and if the circumstance that David is supposed, in the 110th Psalm, to call some person his lord, can be held, according to the Christian argument, to prove that person to be a part of and One with God, then must it with stronger reason follow that King Saul, to whom there is no doubt that David did apply the titles of “my lord,” and the “Messiah of the Eternal,” must also be a part of and one with God. And assuming, for the sake of argument, that the 110th Psalm was written by David, then King Saul must have been the *Adonee* of the Psalm, for he was the only person in all Israel whom David acknowledged as his lord and master. But since Saul had been rejected by God, and is manifestly not the subject of the psalm, therefore it could not have been written by David.

The Christian interpretation and application of the 110th Psalm are also irreconcilable with what are, according to the Old Testament narrative, the undoubted prayers and utterances of David. “Then

¹ 1 Sam. xxiv. 7, 9-11.

went King David in, and sat down before the Eternal, and he said, . . . Therefore art Thou great, O Eternal God; *for there is none like Thee and there is no God beside Thee*, in accordance with all that we have heard with our ears.”¹

“And David spoke unto the Eternal the words of this song, . . . and he said, Eternal, my Rock, my Fortress, and my deliverer; God, my Rock, in whom I trust; my Shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my Refuge, my Saviour! from violence dost Thou save me! . . . *For who is God, save the Eternal? And who is a Rock, save our God?*”²

VI.

“THEN arose King David upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren and my people! . . . And now before the eyes of all Israel, the congregation of the Eternal, and in the hearing of our God (I admonish you), observe and seek for all the commandments of the Eternal your God: in order that ye may keep possession of this good land, and leave it for an inheritance unto your children after you forever. And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with an entire heart and with a willing soul; for all hearts doth the Eternal search, and every imagination of the thoughts doth He understand: if thou seek Him, He will let Himself be found by thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off forever.”³

¹ 2 Sam. vii. 18, 22. ² *Ibid.*, xxii. 1, 2, 32. ³ 1 Chron. xxviii. 2, 8, 9.

“And David blessed the Eternal before the eyes of all the congregation; and David said, Blessed be Thou, O Eternal, the God of Israel our father, from everlasting even unto everlasting. Thine, O Eternal, are the greatness, and the might, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty, yea, all that is in the heavens and on the earth: Thine, O Eternal, is the kingdom, and Thou art exalted as the head above all. And riches and honor come from Thee, and Thou rulest over all; and in Thy hand are power and might; and it is in Thy hand to make great, and to give strength to all.¹ . . . O Eternal, God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, preserve this forever as the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Thy people, and direct their heart firmly unto Thee. And unto Solomon my son do Thou give an undivided heart, to keep Thy commandments, Thy testimonies, and Thy statutes, and to do all, and to build the palace for which I have made preparation. And David said to all the assembly, Bless now the Eternal your God. And all the assembly blessed the Eternal, the God of their fathers, and bent down their heads, and prostrated themselves to the Eternal, and to the king.”²

“And when the days of David drew near that he should die, he charged Solomon his son, saying, I am going the way of all the earth; but be thou strong, and become a man; And keep the charge of the Eternal thy God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, and His ordinances, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses; in order that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and

¹ 1 Chron. xxix. 10-12.

² *Ibid.*, xxix. 18-20.

whithersoever thou turnest thyself; In order that the Eternal may fulfil His word which He hath spoken concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall never fail thee, said He, a man on the throne of Israel.”¹

The language of King David is not that of the New Testament; his religion is not that of a Christian; nor is his faith that of a believer in a triumvirate or any other number of gods. His language and religion are those of a Jew; of one for whom there is but one God, the Eternal, the God of his fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God who declared by the mouth of his servant Moses, “See now that I, even I, am He, *and there is no god with Me*; I alone kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; and no one can deliver out of My hand.”²

Our Christian friends are welcome to all the comfort they can extract from the words of King David.

One of the fundamental theories of Christianity is that the Eternal, that is, God the Father, has delegated all His power and authority to God the Son, and given him His kingdom and rule; and that the Son is to reign until he has subdued all the enemies of the Father, at which time he will deliver up the Kingdom to Him. According to this theory, it is the Son, that is, Jesus Christ, who is to do the work of subduing the enemies of God, and not God Himself. It is Jesus Christ who is to subdue the enemies of God; and not God who is to subdue the enemies of Christ. We therefore read in the New Testament: “Then

¹ 1 Kings ii. 1-4.

² Deut. xxxii. 39.

cometh the end, when he (that is, the Son) shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he (the Son) must reign, till he hath put all enemies under His feet. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”¹

This arrangement is manifestly the very opposite of that mentioned in the first verse of the 110th Psalm: “The Eternal said to my lord (*Adonee*), Sit thou at My right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool”; for we are here told that it is not the person who is the *Adonee* of the Psalm who is to put God’s enemies as a stool under God’s feet; but that this *Adonee* is to sit at the right hand of the Almighty, that is, he is to remain quiet and not bestir himself, until God Himself shall make the enemies of this *Adonee* the latter’s footstool. Supposing, therefore, for the sake of argument, that the 110th Psalm is a Messianic prophecy, and refers to Jesus Christ, we thus find that it directly contradicts one of the fundamental theories of the Christian religion.

There is neither contradiction nor inconsistency about the Psalm, when it is applied to King David, as its subject. He was the *Adonee*, the lord and master, of his country and his subjects; and the Almighty is represented as saying to him, “Sit thou at My right hand,” that is, Remain at home—and David’s place as king was at the right hand of the sanctuary of the Lord—there is no occasion for thee to go out to the

war, "until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The staff of thy strength will the Eternal stretch forth out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of thy enemies." This is applicable to King David, for God did send the rod of his strength out of Zion, and he did rule in the midst of his enemies; but it is not applicable to Jesus, for the latter did not rule in the midst of his enemies, neither did God send him any rod of strength. God, on the contrary, abandoned him; "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" was his dying exclamation.¹

The 110th Psalm is considered to have been composed by some one, now unknown, as an address to King David, on the occasion of the capture of the city of Rabbah. "The land of Rabbah" is mentioned in the sixth verse, and is, in the Anglican version of the Bible, incorrectly translated, "many countries."

David had sent his army, under the command of Joab, upon a campaign against the Ammonites; he himself remaining in Jerusalem. "And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and captured the royal city. And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have also captured the water-town. And now gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and capture it; lest I capture the city myself, and it be called by my name. And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and captured it."²

This explanation will enable us to understand the allusions made in the Psalm, which continues

¹ Matt. xxvii. 46.

² 2 Sam. xii. 26-29.

thus: "Thy people volunteer in the day of thy power, in the ornaments of holiness; thy youth (that is, thy young men, thy warriors) is to thee as dew from the womb of the morning. The Eternal hath sworn, and will not repent of it, Thou art a chief ruler forever, according to promise (or according to My word), O righteous king. The Lord at thy right hand crusheth kings on the day of His wrath. He will judge among the nations—there shall be a fulness of corpses—he crusheth heads over the land of Rabbah. From the brook will he drink on the way (that is, in the haste of pursuit the king will not stop to have water brought to him, but will drink it as he finds it on his way; or it may also mean, Wherever he goes God provides him with the brook to quench his thirst, and so to gain a complete victory): therefore will he lift up the head."¹

There are no recorded events in the life of Jesus that can make the 110th Psalm applicable to him; but it does in every way fit in with what we know of the life of the warrior-king David.

Before leaving this Psalm, it will be well to give some consideration to the fourth verse, the familiar rendering of which is, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent of it, Thou shalt be a priest forever after the order of Malkizedek"; because this translation of the verse is made the subject of an elaborate argument by Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, and the same argument is to this day advanced by Christian theologians. Their contention, briefly stated, is this: that although the Aaronic priesthood was instituted

¹ Ps. cx. 3-7.

by the Almighty under the most solemn sanctions, still it could be changed, and was changed, to make way for the priesthood of Christ and the spiritual priesthood of all believers in him; that the priesthood of Aaron could be changed because it was instituted by God *without an oath*; but that the priesthood of Christ is unchangeable because, according to the verse now in question, "The Lord *hath sworn*, and will not repent of it, thou shalt be a priest forever after the order of Malkizedek"; and Christian opinion, ignoring the context, of course is that Jesus, and no one else, must be here referred to, as the *Adonoe* of the Psalm. We have already seen the absurdity of this contention.

A very obvious objection to this Christian argument is that it likens the Almighty unto a man, whom it is safer to believe on his oath than on his mere word. But, "God is not a man that He should lie; nor a son of man that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? And hath He spoken, and shall He not fulfil it?"¹ This consideration alone is fatal to the Christian contention.

"And the Eternal spoke unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned away My wrath from the children of Israel, while he was zealous in My stead in the midst of them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in My indignation. Therefore say, Behold, I give unto him My covenant of peace; *and it shall be unto him and unto his seed after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God*, and made an atonement for the children of Israel."²

¹ Numb. xxiii. 19.

² *Ibid.*, xxv. 10-13.

It is this formal promise, made by God to Phinehas the Zealous, that our Christian friends contend that the Almighty could break, and did break, because it was given by Him *without an oath* !

VII.

IF we assume, for the sake of argument, that, as Christians pretend, David was a prophet, that the 110th Psalm was a prophecy by him concerning Jesus, and that in this Psalm David predicted a change in the Aaronic priesthood, and the substitution in its place of the priesthood of Christ: then not only does David, in this very important matter, contradict the prophet Moses, but he, David himself, is also contradicted by prophets who came after him and who support Moses. Thus we read in Isaiah: "And they shall bring all your brethren out of all nations as an offering unto the Eternal . . . And of them also will I take for priests and for Levites, saith the Eternal."¹ That is, that from the Israelites who are brought back to their Promised Land, the Almighty will take those who are priests and Levites, and they shall serve before Him; so that, according to Isaiah, the ancient order of priests and Levites is not to be changed, but is to be continued in their descendants.

The perpetuity of the tribe of Levi, as well as that of the house of David, is also foretold by Jeremiah. "For thus hath said the Eternal, There shall never be wanting unto David a man to sit upon the throne of

¹ Isaiah lxvi. 20, 21.

the house of Israel; and unto the priests the Levites there shall not be wanting a man before Me, to offer burnt offerings, and to burn meat offerings, and to prepare sacrifices at all times." "Thus hath said the Eternal, If ye can break My covenant of the day, and My covenant of the night, and so, that there should not be day and night in their season; Then also shall My covenant be broken with David My servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and (that) with the Levites the priests, My ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, and the sand of the sea cannot be measured; so will I multiply the seed of David My servant, and the Levites that minister unto Me."¹ And to this day there are many who claim descent from David; and everywhere we meet with those whom common consent hallows as the sons of Aaron and Levi.

We also read in Ezekiel, "And he said unto me, Son of man, thus hath said the Lord Eternal, These are the statutes of the altar on the day when it shall be finished, to offer thereon burnt-offerings, and to sprinkle thereon blood. And thou shalt give to *the priests the Levites that are of the seed of Zadok*, who approach unto Me, saith the Lord Eternal, to minister unto Me, a young bullock for a sin-offering."² And again, "But *the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok*, that kept the charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me—these are they that shall come near unto Me, to minister unto Me, and they shall stand before Me to offer unto Me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord Eternal: These are

¹ Jere. xxxiii. 17, 18, 20-22.

² Ezek. xliii. 18, 19.

they that shall enter into My sanctuary, and these shall come near to My table, to minister unto Me; and they shall keep My charge.”¹ Zadok, the priest here spoken of, was a descendant of Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron. It was this Zadok who, by command of David, anointed Solomon as king; and Solomon made him high priest in the place of Abiathar, who was descended through Eli from Ithamar, the brother of Phinehas.

We therefore have both Moses and Ezekiel prophesying the continuation of the priesthood of Aaron, as an everlasting priesthood, in his descendants of the line of Phinehas; and we have Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesying the continuation of the ancient order of priests and Levites; and we are in consequence forced to come to one of two conclusions, namely, either that Moses and Ezekiel, and Isaiah and Jeremiah, were false prophets, which is inadmissible, even from the Christian point of view; or else, that our Christian friends are again in error with respect to the meaning and application of the 110th Psalm. And we have already seen that this Psalm is obviously a mere relation by some third person of events that had happened in or were connected with the life of David, and was no prophecy, and had no connection with the Messiah.

There is no difficulty in applying the familiar rendering of the verse, “The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent of it, Thou shall be a priest (*Cohain*) forever after the order of Malkizedek,” to King David; for, in a general sense, every Israelite is a priest (*Cohain*). “And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of

¹ Ezek. xliv. 15, 16.

priests (*Cohanim*) and a holy nation.”¹ The term *Cohain*, priest, also indicated a temporal as well as a spiritual ruler. “And Zadok the son of Achitub, and Achimelech the son of Abiathar, were priests (*Cohanim*); . . . and David’s sons were chief rulers (*Cohanim*).”² “And Sheva was scribe: and Zadok and Abiathar were priests (*Cohanim*); and Ira also the Yairite was an officer of state (*Cohain*) unto David.”³ “And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the army; and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests (*Cohanim*); and Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers; and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer (*Cohain*) and the king’s friend.”⁴ The verse in question therefore simply means that, as Malkizedek was king and priest at Salem, afterward Jerusalem, so David also would be both temporal chief and a priest in the general sense. This precisely indicated the duty of a king of Israel; for it was a part of his duty to organize and superintend the temple worship, as David did, but without infringing on the office of the Aaronic priesthood, in which not even the king of Israel could share.

As already mentioned, the verse in question can also be translated, “Thou art a chief ruler (*Cohain*) forever, according to promise (or according to My word), O righteous king.” The meaning of Malki-zedek” is “righteous king.” This rendering is also applicable to David, in whose line the kingship over Israel was forever guaranteed. “And thy house and thy kingdom shall be steadfast forever before thee; thy

¹ Exod. xix. 6. ² 2 Sam. viii. 17, 18. ³ *Ibid.*, xx. 25, 26.

⁴ 1 Kings iv. 4, 5.

throne shall be established forever.”¹ “And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they, and their children, and their children’s children forever; and David My servant shall be their prince forever.”²

Thus, from whatever point of view we consider the 2d and 110th Psalms, we find the Christian interpretation and application of them forced and unwarranted, and manifestly and absurdly wrong.

The next questions were: “Do you not believe us when we say that we hold fast the Unity of the Godhead? We do not regard Christ as separate from the Father in the sense in which the Prince of Wales is separate from the Queen. Christ Himself says, ‘I and the Father are One.’”³ How can Christ be possibly the Son of God and *good*, if He does not speak the truth? Did He in any sense put Himself forward as a rival of the Almighty, another God? If He was without sin, why did He die? How did He rise from the dead? If He did not rise, what became of His body?”

It is not surprising that the confusion of ideas that is inseparable from any consideration of the Christian doctrines of the divinity of Jesus, and of a Trinity in Unity, should so perplex my correspondent, learned minister of the Gospel though he be, that he should ask such conflicting questions as those just mentioned. Questions of this kind the Jews are not called upon to answer. They are a consequence of the impossible position into which our Christian friends have placed themselves; and they must solve their own enigmas.

¹ 2 Sam. vii. 16.

² Ezek. xxxvii. 25.

³ John x. 30.

It is a singular circumstance that the doctrines that were adopted as orthodox by the Christian church, concerning the nature and the distinction of the three Gods who composed their Trinity, should have been fixed and determined by the disciples and commentators of a heathen philosopher who lived 400 years before the birth of Jesus. In the fourth century before Christ, the speculations of Plato, the Athenian philosopher, upon the nature of the Cause or Creator of the universe led him to study it under the threefold aspect of a First Cause, the Reason or *Logos*, and the Soul or Spirit of the universe; and the *Logos* was specially considered by him under the familiar character of the Son of an Eternal Father, and the Creator and Governor of the world. The conquests of Alexander the Great carried the language and learning of Greece into Egypt and Asia; and the theological system of Plato was taught in the schools of Alexandria, Antioch, and other Eastern cities. The Old Academy, or direct followers of Plato, the New Academy, or disciples of Carneades, and the peripatetic adherents of Aristotle, all had their own schools, and their own particular *Logos*, who agreed with the others in some points, and differed in some. They had their teachers in every city, and studied not only the works of their two great masters and those of Xenophon, which we now possess, but also the sixty treatises of Xenocrates and others, which have since been lost.

The *Logos* of Plato thus became as well known to the subtle-witted people of the East as to the educated Greeks; and the heathen philosophy of the age greatly favored the progress of Christianity and dictated its

doctrines. Antioch, which had been the capital of the Syro-Grecian empire, and had become the seat of the Roman governors, was for a time the centre of Christian energy. Paul and Barnabas went forth from that city to preach to the Gentiles, and they returned thither to report their success to those by whom "they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled"¹; and projected with them future missions. The Apostle John long resided at Ephesus, the centre of the mingling opinions of the East and the West; for sixty years he lived in the centres of Greek philosophy; and his Gospel, written when he was ninety years old, disclosed to the Gentile world the amazing secret that the *Logos*, who was with God from the beginning, and was God, who had made all things, and for whom all things had been made, had been incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.² After the *Logos* had been thus proclaimed as the sacred object of the faith, the hope, and the religious worship of the Christians, their mysterious system was readily embraced by a numerous and increasing multitude in every province of the Roman Empire; and the sanction thus bestowed by the last of the Apostles on the fundamental principle of the theology of Plato encouraged the learned Gentile proselytes to more closely study the writings of the Athenian philosopher who had so marvellously anticipated the most surprising discovery of the so-called Christian revelation. The philosophical speculations and abstruse metaphysical questions that had neither convinced the understanding nor inflamed the passions

¹ Acts xiv. 26.² John i.

of the Platonists—that had been carelessly regarded by the idle, the busy, and even the studious part of mankind—that had been treated as the amusement of a vacant hour; these speculations became to the Christian world the most serious business of the present and the most useful preparation for a future life. A theology which it was incumbent to believe and impious to doubt, and which it might be dangerous and even fatal to mistake, became the familiar topic of private meditation and popular discourse. The same subtle and profound questions concerning the three divine persons of the mysterious *Triad* or *Trinity*—an abstract term that was already familiar to the schools of philosophy, and was from them introduced into the theology of the Christians—that had been agitated in the philosophical, were discussed in the Christian, schools of Alexandria. The cold indifference of philosophy was replaced by the fervent spirit of devotion; and Christians, even of the uneducated classes, readily undertook to solve the questions that had perplexed the wisest of the Grecian sages.

These remarks have been taken from Gibbon,¹ and they enable us to understand from what source our Christian friends have taken their religious system. It is upon the theories of Plato and his exponents, and not upon the theology of Moses and the other prophets of the Old Testament, that the fundamental doctrines of Christianity are based.

¹ Gibbon's "Rome," vol. 2, ch. 21 (Bohn, 1854).

VIII.

THE Gospel of John is said to have been written in answer to the importunities of the Asiatic bishops, and as a confirmation of their faith. Besides the general design of fixing on a firm basis the divine honors of Christ, it had the particular intention of confuting two opposite doctrines which, even in the time of the Apostle, disturbed the peace of, and were condemned as heretical by, the Christian church.

The first of these heresies was that of the Ebionites, or Jewish Christians. They regarded Jesus as the greatest of the prophets, and endowed with supernatural virtue and power. They ascribed to his person all the predictions of the Hebrew prophets relating to the promised Messiah; but they obstinately rejected the doctrine of his preceding existence and divinity, and they were therefore accounted as heretics by the Christian fathers. The Ebionites as a sect soon ceased to exist; and if Christianity had depended on the Jewish people alone for support, it would never have adopted the Platonic doctrine of the Trinity, nor would it have long survived the period of its birth.

The second and opposite heresy was that held by the Gnostics, who were distinguished by the epithet of *Docetes*. These deviated into the contrary extreme to the Ebionites, and denied the human, while they asserted the divine, nature of Jesus. Being Gentile converts, educated in the school of Plato, and accustomed to the idea of the *Logos*, they readily conceded

that the brightest emanation of the Deity might assume the outward shape and visible appearance of a mortal; but they contended that the imperfection of matter was incompatible with the purity of a celestial substance; that instead of issuing from the womb of the virgin, Jesus had descended on the banks of the Jordan in the form of perfect manhood; that he had imposed on the senses of his enemies and his disciples; and that the ministers of Pilate had wasted their impotent rage on an airy phantom, who *seemed* (whence their name of *Docetes*) to expire on the cross, and after three days to rise from the dead. They, also, were accounted as heretics by the Christian fathers.

Orthodox Christianity, as it came to be developed under the contending influences that governed its course, required from its followers a belief in the human as well as in the divine nature of Jesus. It required them to believe that he was both "God and man, born and unborn, God in flesh, life in death, born of Mary and born of God." That he was perfectly human, his followers could not doubt; the force of circumstances compelled them to admit it; and it would have been ridiculous of them to have attempted to deny it. For he was born of a woman, and was suckled and grew like other children; he had flesh and bones like other men; and he passed through the stages of life, and suffered hunger and thirst, weariness and pain, and wounds and death, like other men. His soul, also, was a human soul, just as his body was a human body; and he increased gradually in knowledge and wisdom, as he did in stature; and he felt sorrow and sympathy, and was subject to temptation,

and was liable to all the common emotions of human nature.

At the same time it was impossible for any Christian, who accepted as divine revelations the writings of St. John and St. Paul, to suppose that the Saviour, in whom he was taught to trust and into whose name he was baptized, was a mere human being like himself. The Christian church claimed that Jesus was the Son of God, and that he was a God. Eighty years after his death, the Christians of Bithynia declared before the tribunal of Pliny that they invoked him as a God; and divine honors have been paid him in every age and country by the various sects who assume the name of his disciples. The Platonic theory of the creation of the world by the *Logos*, or Son of God, was gradually introduced among the Christians; and after it came to be accepted by their theologians, and confirmed by the last of the Apostles, the dignity of the *workman* very naturally rose with that of *the work*. And though the character of a *Son*, that was ascribed to him, might seem to imply a perpetual subordination to the Author of his existence, yet, it was argued, the act of generation, even in the most spiritual and abstract sense, must be supposed to transmit to the son the properties of the father's nature; and therefore it came to be deemed impious by the followers of the new religion to even venture to circumscribe the powers and duration of the Son of an eternal and omnipotent Father. These and other considerations engaged the early Christians to assert the equal and absolute divinity of the *Logos*; and their zeal would have even claimed for him the throne of heaven, if they had not been

prevented by the necessity of admitting the supremacy of God the Father, whose pre-eminence, however, was acknowledged by them only so far as it was deemed to be compatible with the independence of the Son. This brief exposition, also taken principally from Gibbon,¹ will enable us to form an idea of the position and importance assigned to Jesus in the Trinity of the Christian religion.

The same historian observes that the human understanding was capable of forming three distinct systems concerning the nature of the Trinity; and it was held by orthodox Christianity that none of these systems were exempt from heresy and error.

The first system was that of the Tritheists. According to this system, there were three Gods; and the *Logos* possessed all the inherent and incommunicable perfections which religion and philosophy appropriate to the Supreme God. Three distinct and infinite minds or substances, three co-equal and co-eternal beings, composed the divine essence; and it would have implied contradiction that any of them should not have existed, or that they should ever cease to exist. The advocates of this system, which seemed to establish three independent deities, attempted to preserve the Unity of the First Cause, so conspicuous in the design and order of the world, by pleading the perpetual concord of their administration and the essential agreement of their will. The three gods are guided by such infinite wisdom and goodness that they always choose the same means for the accomplishment of the same ends. But this doctrine of the

¹ Gibbon's "Rome," vol. 2, ch. 21 (Bohn, 1854).

Tritheists was rejected by the orthodox Christian church as heretical, because to acknowledge a belief in three Gods was obviously nothing else than idolatry. The belief might be there, but it could not be avowed, and had to be disguised.

The second hypothesis was that of the Sabellians. In this system, three Beings who possess all the divine attributes in their most perfect degree—who are eternal in duration, infinite in space, and intimately present to each other and to the whole universe—irresistibly force themselves on the astonished mind as one and the same Being, who may manifest Himself under different forms and be considered under different aspects. By this hypothesis, a real substantial Trinity is refined into a trinity of names; and the *Logos* is no longer a person, but an attribute. The incarnation of the *Logos* is reduced to a mere inspiration of the divine wisdom, which filled the soul and directed all the actions of the man Jesus; and it is only in a figurative sense that the title of *Son* can be applied to the eternal reason which was with God from the beginning, and by *which*, and not by *whom*, all things were made. The doctrine of Sabellius was rejected as heretical by the Christian fathers, because it maintained that there is but one person in the Godhead, and that the Son and the Holy Spirit are only different powers, operations, or offices of the One God the Father. The Sabellians, in short, did not make the distinction between the three Gods who composed the Christian Trinity broad enough.

The third system was that maintained by Arius and his disciples; and it was condemned by the Christian

church because it made the distinction between God the Father, and the Son, too great. According to the Arian doctrine, the *Logos* was a dependent and spontaneous production, created from nothing by the will of the Father. The Son, by whom all things were made, had been begotten before all worlds; and the longest of the astronomical periods could be compared only as a fleeting moment to the extent of his duration; yet this duration was not infinite, and *there had been a time* which preceded the ineffable generation of the *Logos*. On this only begotten Son the Almighty Father had transfused His ample spirit and impressed the effulgence of His glory. Visible image of invisible perfection, he saw at an immeasurable distance beneath his feet the thrones of the brightest archangels; yet he shone only with a reflected light, and he governed the universe in obedience to the will of his Father and Monarch. Arianism was condemned as heretical, because it held Christ to be a created being; inferior to God the Father in nature and dignity; and orthodox Christianity did not admit this. By making Christ subordinate to God, Arius denied his divinity in its highest sense; and for doing this he was excommunicated.¹

The struggle of the Christian church against Arianism led to the holding of the Council of Nice; and the Nicene Creed—"the holy symbol declared at Nice, established at Constantinople, strengthened at Ephesus, and sealed at Chalcedon"—proclaimed the belief of orthodox Christianity with regard to the three gods who composed the Trinity of their theological system.

¹ Gibbon's "Rome," vol. 2, ch. 21 (Bohn, 1854).

This confession of faith ordered belief "in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things, both visible and invisible; and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the son of God, begotten of the Father, only begotten, that is to say, of the substance of the Father, God of God and Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, both things in heaven and things on earth, who, for us men and for our salvation, came down and was made flesh, made man, suffered, and rose again on the third day, went up into the heavens, and is to come again to judge the quick and the dead; and in the Holy Ghost."

The Nicene Creed may be taken, in more than one sense, as a very suggestive exposition of Christian belief regarding the three Gods of their Trinity. For, of the 122 words within the quotation marks, 14 refer to the Father Almighty, 5 to the Holy Ghost, and 103 are devoted to Jesus Christ; and this apportionment of the creed between the three Gods may be regarded as emblematical of the relative importance attached to each of them in the religious system of our Christian friends.

IX

THE synopsis I have just given of orthodox Christian belief and doctrine regarding the three Gods who compose their Trinity will throw light on the questions asked by my correspondent.

"Do you not believe us when we say that we hold fast the Unity of the Godhead? Christ Himself says, "I and the Father are One."¹ One what? One person? One Being? One God? Certainly not; for this would not only be inconsistent with the relationship that is expressed by the terms "Father" and "Son," but it would also be contrary to the belief of orthodox Christianity.

As we have seen, the orthodox Christian belief with regard to their Trinity is that there are three co-existent and co-eternal Gods, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, each of whom has his own hypostasis, or separate and distinct being, which is commonly expressed by saying that the Godhead consists of *three persons*; and that the second person in the Godhead, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the creator of all things in heaven and on earth.² These three Gods do not together constitute One God, but One Godhead; that is, they are said to be One, not because they form but One Being or God, not because they are different names or manifestations of the One God, but because they are supposed to partake of the same divine nature, and to possess the same attributes, and to together constitute the one executive or governing body or committee. This being the Christian belief, their expressions of the "Unity of the Godhead," and of a "Trinity in Unity," are incorrect, meaningless, and incomprehensible phrases, and mere catchpenny expressions with which our Christian friends deceive themselves, and with which they would try to lead the Israelites astray. What the Christian theory

¹ John x. 30.

² John i. 3, 10; Colos. i. 16.

really gives us is a triumvirate of Gods, only they dare not designate it by this, its correct expression, because, if so presented, it would conflict so glaringly with the revelations the Almighty given us in the Old Testament, that none of them who professed to believe in the latter could ever accept it. Therefore they disguise their doctrine under phrases that human intelligence has never been able to understand, much less to explain.

The word *Godhead* is not to be found in the Old Testament; and the *Unity of the Godhead* is an expression that has no meaning in Old Testament language. The Jewish Scriptures declare the *Unity of God*, but this is not the same thing, and has not the same meaning, as the *Unity of the Godhead*. The latter expression is a phrase that one cannot understand, and whose meaning cannot be explained, because it is involved in darkness, perplexity, and inevitable contradiction. Even the great Athanasius, who was the master-mind of the Council of Nice, and who has been called the most sagacious of Christian theologians, confessed that whenever he forced his understanding to meditate on the subject of the Trinity, his toilsome and unavailing efforts recoiled on themselves; that the more he thought, the less he comprehended; and the more he wrote, the less capable was he of expressing his thoughts.¹

The "Unity of God," on the other hand, is an expression that conveys to our minds a distinct and definite meaning; and it teaches us a doctrine, simple but most sublime, that even a child can understand.

¹ Gibbon's "Rome," vol. 2, p. 400 (Bohn, 1854).

It teaches us that there is but One God, who is the Almighty and Sole Creator, Preserver and Ruler of the world; and this teaching is in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Old Testament revelation. For, if there is one doctrine that is affirmed and reaffirmed, over and over again, in the Jewish Scriptures, and insisted upon more than any other, it is the grand dogma that there is but ONE SOLE GOD, who is the Creator of heaven and earth, and that beside Him there is none else.

A few quotations from the Old Testament will show us how radically opposed the Jewish Scriptures are to the Christian theory of there being three Gods—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

“Hear, O Israel, the Eternal our God, the Eternal is One.”¹—“Unto thee it was shown, that thou mightest know, that the Eternal is God; there is none else beside Him.”²—“Know, therefore, this day, and reflect in thy heart, that the Eternal He is the God in the heavens above, and upon the earth beneath, there is none else.”³—“See, now, that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me; I alone kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; and no one can deliver out of My hand.”⁴—“Thus hath said the Eternal, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Eternal of Hosts, I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no god.”⁵—“Fear ye not, neither be afraid; have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? Ye are even My witnesses. Is there a god beside Me? Yea, there is no god; I know not any.”⁶—“I am the

¹ Deut. vi. 4.

² *Ibid.* iv. 35.

³ *Ibid.* iv. 39.

⁴ *Ibid.* xxxii. 39.

⁵ Isaiah xlv. 6.

⁶ *Ibid.* xlv. 8.

Eternal, and there is none else, there is no god beside Me; I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me; that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me; I am the Eternal, and there is none else.”¹—“Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I, the Eternal? and there is no god else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me. Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.”²—“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me.”³—“I am the Eternal, thy God, from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no God but Me; and there is no saviour beside Me.”⁴

“Then went King David in, and sat down before the Eternal, and he said . . . Therefore art Thou great, O Eternal God; for there is none like Thee, and there is no god beside Thee, in accordance with all that we have heard with our ears.”⁵—“And Solomon now placed himself before the altar of the Eternal in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven; And he said, Eternal, the God of Israel, there is no god like thee, in the heavens above, and on the earth beneath, Thou who keepest the covenant and the kindness for Thy servants that walk before Thee with all their heart.”⁶—“And let these my words, wherewith I have made

¹ Isaiah xlv. 5, 6.² *Ibid.* xlv. 21, 22.³ *Ibid.* xlvi. 9.⁴ Hosea xiii. 4.⁵ 2 Sam. vii. 18, 22.⁶ 1 Kings viii. 22, 23.

supplication before the Eternal, be nigh unto the Eternal our God day and night, that He maintain the cause of His servant, and the cause of His people Israel in their daily necessities. That all the people of the earth may know that the Eternal He is the God, and there is none else.”¹

These are but a few of the hundreds of verses to be found in the Jewish Scriptures in which the Unity of God is declared in language plain and simple enough to meet the understanding of all; and which neither man nor child can fail to comprehend. Against these forcible and unequivocal assertions of the absolute Unity of God our Christian friends are unable to cite from the Old Testament even one equally plain and straightforward declaration in favor of their theory of a trinity or triumvirate of Gods; they cannot quote, in favor of their doctrine, one verse from the Old Testament that cannot easily be shown to have an obviously different and more reasonable meaning than the one they give it: and yet they will persist in trying to induce the Jews to disobey the God who commanded, “I am the Eternal thy God; thou shalt have no other god before Me.”²

Orthodox Christianity also claims that Jesus, the *Logos*, the pretended Son of God, was the creator of all things in heaven and on earth;³ and, believing this, my correspondent, a learned Christian minister, asks, “Did He in any sense put Himself forward as a rival of the Almighty, another god?” The question shows again how conflicting and inconsistent are the ideas that Christians find themselves obliged to reconcile,

¹ 1 Kings viii. 59, 60. ² Exod. xx. 2, 3. ³ John i. 3, 10; Colos. i. 16.

when they attempt to justify their belief in the existence of their trinity. Thus, they take up here two positions that are utterly irreconcilable with one another; for they pretend, on the one hand, that Jesus was the creator of heaven and earth; and, on the other, they would have us believe that they do not put him forward as the rival of the Almighty, and another god!

The Old Testament shows as little consideration for the Christian doctrine of the creation of the world by Jesus as it does for their claim of the existence of three gods.

“Thus hath said the Eternal, thy Redeemer, and He that formed thee from the womb, I am the Eternal, who hath made all things; who hath stretched forth the heavens by Myself alone; who hath spread abroad the earth from My own self.”¹—“Thus hath said the Eternal, the Holy One of Israel, . . . I Myself have made the earth, and created man upon it; I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens, and I have ordained all their host.”²—“For thus hath said the Eternal, the Creator of the heavens; He, the God that formed the earth and made it; He that hath established it,—not for naught did He create it, to be inhabited did He form it; I am the Eternal, and there is no one else.”³—“Hearken unto Me, O Jacob, and Israel, My called one! I am He; I am the first, I also am the last. My hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand hath spanned out the heavens; I call unto them, they stand forward together.”⁴—“And thou forgettest the Eternal, thy

¹ Isaiah xlv. 24.

² *Ibid.* xlv. 11, 12.

³ *Ibid.* xlv. 18.

⁴ *Ibid.* xlviii. 12, 13.

Maker, who hath spread out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth.”¹ — “By the word of the Eternal were the heavens made; and by the breath of His mouth all their host. . . . Let all the earth fear the Eternal: of Him stand in awe all the inhabitants of the world. For He spoke, and it came into being: He commanded, and it stood fast.”²

All the sophistical reasonings and fallacious arguments of Christian theologians cannot alter or affect the word of the Almighty; when He declares that there is no god beside Him, there is none, neither Jesus Christ nor Holy Ghost; and all the arguments in the world cannot prevent us from being obliged to come to the conclusion that Christianity is not the religion of the Old Testament, but a system of faith and worship essentially opposed to it.

Eighteen hundred years of Christian teaching have utterly failed to convince the people of Israel of its truth; and ten times as many more years of the same teaching will leave the Jews what they are to-day, firm believers in the absolute Unity and the truth of the God who commanded, “I am the Eternal, thy God, and thou shalt know no god but Me; and there is no saviour beside Me.”³

¹ Isaiah li. 13.

² Ps. xxxiii. 6, 8, 9.

³ Hosea xiii. 4.

X

“How can Christ be possibly the Son of God and *good*, if He does not speak the truth? If He was without sin, why did He die? How did He rise from the dead? If He did not rise, what became of His body?”

We have in the first two of these questions another instance of the false reasoning and confusion of ideas that are inseparable from any consideration of the Christian doctrine of the divinity of Jesus; for, if he were God, he must have been without sin; and if he died because he was not without sin, therefore he could not have been God.

The other two questions do not call for any answer, because the Jews do not accept the New Testament as a divinely inspired book, and do not admit the truth of the Gospel account of the crucifixion and death of Jesus, and of his resurrection from the dead. In my article on “Christian Attempts to Convert Jews,” published in a newspaper¹ last year, I mentioned some of the reasons the Jews have for denying the truth of the New Testament; and it will not be out of place to briefly recapitulate the principal grounds of opinion there advanced.

I. There is no record and no evidence of Jesus having been crucified, and of the wonderful events said to have attended his crucifixion having occurred, save and except the Gospels themselves. The Jews

¹ In *The Jewish Times*, of Montreal, in March and April, 1900.

who were at Jerusalem at the time appear to have known nothing about them, and the Jews who were in Rome and other cities out of Palestine appear to have heard nothing about them from their friends and correspondents in Jerusalem and Judea, since there is no Jewish account of them; and the Romans also appear to have known nothing about them, since no heathen historian of the day mentions them. Josephus must have known of the doings and death of Jesus, if they were such as described in the Gospels, but he takes no notice of them at all; for the paragraph in his history relating to Jesus is now admitted to have been a pious fraud of the church interpolated at a later time. It is also evident, from the mistakes made in the Talmud concerning Jesus, that the curiosity of the learned Jews had never been interested in him and his teachings until so long after his time that reliable information about him was unobtainable. For these and other reasons I then mentioned we come to the conclusion that not only have we no grounds for believing that Jesus was put to death in the manner related in the Gospels, or that the Jews had any hand in his death, but that we have every reason to believe the contrary.

II. It is well known that the lists of what have been considered by the Christians as canonical books have differed in different ages. Some books, now acknowledged by Christians to be forgeries, were, in the second and third centuries after Christ, considered to be just as apostolic as those are deemed that are now received, and, as such, were publicly read in the Christian churches. Gospels, Epistles, Acts, and Revelations almost without number, published in the

names and under the feigned authority of Jesus and his Apostles, abounded in the early Christian church. During the first centuries of the Christian era, all the different sects of Christians, without a known exception, altered, interpolated, and garbled their different copies of their various and discordant gospels in order to adapt them to their jarring and whimsical philosophical and theological notions. They accused each other of doing these things. The Jewish Christians did not acknowledge the divinity of Jesus, and never received, but rejected, the books of the present New Testament; and they held in especial abomination the writings of Paul, whom they called an apostate. The events recorded in these books were nowhere so little believed as in Judea, among the people in whose midst they are said to have happened, and where they should, if true, have met with the most credence. And in the opinion of some of the most eminent Christian authorities on ecclesiastical history and antiquities, the present New Testament is nothing else than a collection of forgeries written by partisans of the different sects in the early Christian church, and entitled apostolic, in order the better to answer their various purposes.

III. In any case, it is immaterial to the Jews whether the narrative of the Gospels be historically true or not. It can make no difference to the people of Israel whether Jesus was a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, whether he and the Apostles performed miracles and said and did all the things attributed to them by the New Testament, or not. It is sufficient for us that the New Testament teaches the worship of other

gods than the One Supreme Being, the Holy One of Israel; and that is enough to condemn it and its doctrines in the eyes of all Israel. "If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he giveth thee a sign or token; and the sign or the token came to pass, whereof he spoke unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou dost not know, and let us serve them; Then shalt thou not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or unto that dreamer of dreams; *for the Eternal your God proveth you*, to know whether ye indeed love the Eternal your God with all your heart and with all your soul. After the Eternal your God shall ye walk, and Him shall ye fear, and His commandments shall ye keep, and His voice shall ye obey, and Him shall ye serve, and unto Him shall ye cleave." ¹

From this summary of some of the reasons why the Jews do not accept the New Testament as a divinely inspired book, and do not believe the Gospel account of the death and resurrection of Jesus, and do not attach any importance to them even if they did occur in the manner related, my readers can understand that it is unnecessary to make any further reply to the questions, "How did Jesus rise from the dead? If He did not rise, what became of His body?"

The next questions were:—"Is it not true that 500 Jewish Christians preach the Gospel throughout Europe every Lord's Day? Have they ceased to be children of Abraham and worshippers of the One God, because they worship the Messiah—One in essence with the Father?"

¹ Deut. xii. 2-5.

My correspondent is here begging the question, and taking for granted that which the Jews strenuously deny; for they neither admit that Jesus was the Messiah, nor that he is one in essence with the Almighty. "Thus hath said the Eternal, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD of Hosts, I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no god."¹ "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me."² And that the Messiah has not yet come is evidenced by the fact that none of the prophecies respecting the events that are to happen in connection with his advent have yet been fulfilled. Wars have not yet ceased; the sword has not yet been beaten into a plough-share, nor the spear into a pruning-hook; the wolf has not yet taken up his abode with the lamb, nor does the leopard lie down with the kid; the worship of idols is still prevalent among the heathen nations; and by all people but the Jews themselves, divine attributes are still ascribed, and divine honors are paid, to other gods than the Eternal, the Holy One of Israel.

The Jews do not expect to find in the Messiah, for whose speedy coming they daily supplicate the Almighty, a person entitled to their worship, which belongs to God Alone. The Jewish Scriptures teach them to expect in the Messiah a human being, a descendant of King David, one who will be no more of a mediator between them and God than were Moses and the other prophets. He is to be the prophet and messenger of God; the King whom God will anoint to collect and reign over the restored remnant of Israel;

¹ Isaiah xlv. 6.

² *Ibid.* xlv. 9.

the appointed agent of God's power, to redeem the Israelites from their present state of dispersion, and gather them from the four quarters of the globe, and reassemble them in the land of Palestine; but his mission is to be purely sublunary, and he will be only a mortal, and therefore without any power of salvation, which appertains alone to the Almighty. But, though only a mortal, the Messiah will not be an ordinary mortal, but one endowed with the most exalted moral and intellectual faculties. "On him shall rest the spirit of the Eternal, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Eternal. And he shall be animated by the fear of the Eternal; and not after the sight of his eyes shall he judge, and not after the hearing of his ears shall he decide; but he shall judge with righteousness the poor, and decide with equity for the suffering ones of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his hips."¹ "And he shall reign as king, and prosper, and he shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth. In his days shall Judah be saved, and Israel shall dwell in safety; and this is the name by which the Eternal shall call him, Our Righteousness."² We have in these verses a perfect description of the distinguishing characteristics of the expected King Messiah; and the Jews look forward to his advent with eager anticipation, and to himself with feelings of the utmost respect and love, as the

¹ Isaiah xi. 2-5.² Jere. xxiii. 5, 6.

chosen agent of God's gracious promises of mercy to the remnant of His people, but they will not worship him. Their worship is due to the Eternal alone, to the Holy One of Israel.

I have no means of determining the accuracy of my correspondent's statement regarding the number of Jewish Christians who may be preaching the Gospel in Europe; but, admitting, for the sake of argument, that he is right, and that there are in Europe 500 apostate Jews who have bartered for a mess of pottage the glorious birthright belonging to them as sons of Israel, and priests of the Eternal, and the witnesses on earth of His Unity, that circumstance does not establish the truth of Christianity, or prove the existence of more than one God. "Thus hath said the Eternal, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD of Hosts, I am the first and I am the last, and beside Me there is no god" ¹; and even if there were 50,000 apostate Jews preaching the Gospel every day, all their preaching could avail nothing against the word of the Almighty.

Those who to-day are known to the Christian world as children of Abraham, and inheritors of the promises made to him, are not the descendants of the apostates from Judaism of 100 or 500 years ago; but they are those Jews who have remained faithful to their religion and true to their allegiance to the God of their fathers. "I, the Eternal, thy God, am a jealous God." ² "I am the Eternal, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to any other, nor My praise to graven images." ³ A Jew ceases to be one the

¹ Isaiah xliv. 6.

² Exod. xx. 5.

³ Isaiah xlii. 8.

moment he begins to worship any other than the God with whom the covenant was made in Horeb; and when he breaks that covenant he is so utterly cut off from his people that even the Christian world ceases to look upon him and his offspring as children of Abraham.

XI

THE next question was, "Supposing that you misunderstand the truth of Christianity, are we not bound to try our best to show you your mistake—if we can—in every fair and honorable way?"

Unfortunately for the Jews, the methods adopted by Christians to show them their supposed mistake have never been such as can be described as either fair or honorable. In the preface to his "Grounds of Christianity," English says: "The Christian system is built upon the prostrate necks of the whole Hebrew nation. It is a tree which flourished in a soil watered by their tears; its leaves grew green in an atmosphere filled with their cries and groans; and its roots have been moistened and fattened with their blood. The ruin, reproach, and sufferings of that people are considered by its advocates as the most striking proofs of the Divine authority of the New Testament; and for almost eighteen hundred years the system contained in that book has been the cause of miseries and afflictions to that nation, the most horrible and unparalleled in the history of man.

"Now, if that system be indeed Divine, all this may

be very well, and as it should be. But if, perchance it should turn out to be a mistake; if it be, in truth, not from God, will not, then, that system be justly chargeable with all those shocking cruelties which, on account of it, have been inflicted on that people?"

To the Jewish mind there can be but one answer made to the question suggested by English; and our Christian friends would do well to ponder this question, and to ask themselves what justification they will be able to advance, and what plea they can make, when Jew and Christian shall confront each other before that Bar where truth will prevail, and the sophistries of man will be of no use.

The Jews do not misunderstand what my correspondent calls "the truth of Christianity"; and they make no mistake when they refuse to believe its fantastic theories. The so-called "truth of Christianity" consists, fundamentally, in the doctrine that there are three Gods, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that Jesus Christ, the second person in this triumvirate, was the creator of heaven and earth¹; that besides these three Gods there is another being of well-nigh equal power with them, namely, Satan, or the Devil, who is the God of Evil and the inveterate enemy of mankind; that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became incarnate and offered himself, or, rather, that God the Father offered God the Son as a sacrifice in order to redeem the human race from the power of the Devil; and that the whole of mankind, with the exception of those who believe in Christ, belong to the kingdom of the Devil, and are doomed to everlasting punishment.

¹ John i. 3, 10; Colos. i. 16.

These are the primary or essential "truths of Christianity" that all Christians may be said to accept; beyond these fundamental doctrines each of the numerous sects into which Christians are divided has its own tenets, and its own opinion as to what constitutes the "truth of Christianity," and denies the possession of Christian truth by any other sect of Christians, and looks upon all other Christians as being under the power of Satan. The Jews reject these fundamental doctrines of Christianity, because belief in them is as impossible to them as a fair and honest rendering and application of the Jewish Scriptures appear to be to our Christian friends.

Take, for instance, the Christian doctrine of the incarnation of God. To a person brought up and educated in the Christian religion it may be possible, and appears quite natural, to believe that God—the Great, Mighty, and Holy God—shut Himself up in the womb of a woman, and went through all the nastiness of human birth; that He was suckled, cuffed, and spanked after the manner of other children; that He lived in poverty and in obscurity during nearly the whole of His career on earth; and when He did emerge from that obscurity, and attracted a little local attention, that He was scourged, and put to a shameful death by a handful of His creatures. It may not be repugnant to the feelings and ideas of a Christian to believe these things of his Creator; but to a Jew, who holds the Eternal his God in such fear and reverence that he even abstains from pronouncing His Holy Name, the very idea of such things, in connection with Him, is most shocking, and blasphemous beyond all

expression. And how a Christian can suppose that the Almighty can be pleased, or feel Himself honored, by having such things believed of Him, is utterly incomprehensible to a Jew.

It would be but a repetition of what has been already abundantly proved to show that the Old Testament denies in the most positive manner every one of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. In affirming, not once only, but scores upon scores of times, that the Eternal is the One Supreme Being, the first and the last, that He is the sole Creator of heaven and earth, and that beside Him there is no god and no one else, the Old Testament repudiates in the most emphatic way all the theories of the Christian religion that are based upon the belief in the existence of three Gods, and of a Fourth Being or Evil Spirit, possessed of power almost equal to that of the three Gods. If the Hebrew Scriptures contained only one declaration of the Unity of God,—if there were only the statement, “Hear, O Israel, the Eternal our God, the Eternal is One,”¹—this alone would be amply sufficient to refute the Christian theory of a triumvirate of Gods; how much more completely then is the Christian doctrine proved to be false when we take into consideration the almost numberless repetitions of the Divine affirmation that the Eternal is One Alone, and beside Him there is no god, and no one else! If the Old Testament had been written subsequently to the New, and for the express purpose of proving the latter to be false, it could not have done this more clearly and emphatically than it actually does.

¹ Deut. vi. 4.

On the most vital and essential point of revealed religion,—the Unity of God,—the Old and the New Testament flatly contradict each other, and the latter even disproves itself¹; and if, as the Jews claim, and Christians are forced to admit, the Old Testament contains a revelation from God, then the New Testament cannot be from Him, since it teaches as true that which the Old Testament explicitly, repeatedly, and formally denies. It is incompatible with the attributes of the Almighty to suppose that He can be at any time in error, or can contradict Himself; and that He can at one time affirm to be true that which He has at other times expressly and distinctly denied. God cannot be the Author of two revelations, one of which is inconsistent with the other. One of them must be not from Him, and false. And whether our Christian friends accept or reject the Old Testament, they cannot in either case establish the truth of the New; for if they admit the truth of the Old Testament as a revelation from God, they deny that of the New; and if they should attempt to support the New Testament at the expense of the Old, they must equally fail of their object, because the New Testament is professedly built upon the Old as its foundation.

The next questions were, “How do you account for the plurality in the Godhead, as revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures? To whom was the Almighty speaking when He said, ‘Let *us* make man in *our* image’? Is this explained by the plural of majesty simply?”

My correspondent is in error when he states that the Hebrew Scriptures reveal a plurality in the God-

¹ Mark xii. 29, 32.

head. As has been already pointed out, the word *Godhead* is not to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures; and they speak only of One God, the Eternal, and declare, over and over again, that beside Him there is no god, and no one else.

It must be remembered that plural forms are often used in the Hebrew language, where other languages employ the singular. Thus, under the plural form are expressed extensions of space and time, portions of space, regions, and places. The words, *heaven*, *water*, are rendered in Hebrew by nouns in the plural; *Jerusalem*, apparently in the dual, is a noun in the plural form; certain members of the body, which are spaces on its surface, as *neck*, *face*, are expressed by words in the plural; spaces of time, as *life*, *youth*, *old age*, by nouns in the plural; and states or qualities that are permanent or of long continuance, such as *perverseness*, *compassion*, *childlessness*, are also expressed by nouns in the plural form. The word *Teraphim*, images, is always in the plural, even when only one image is meant. Thus, when Saul sent messengers to David's house, to watch for and slay him, "Michal took an image (*Teraphim*) and put it in the bed, . . . and when the messengers were come in, behold, there was an image (*Teraphim*) in the bed."¹

Words denoting *might* and *power*, these being originally conceived as something distributed and manifold, are expressed under the plural form. Particularly so is this the case with the word *El*, God, which, whether for the purpose of representing the

¹ 1 Sam. xix. 13, 16.

Divine power in its developments, or of conveying the idea of "God of gods,"¹ is nearly always expressed in the plural form, *Elohim*, Gods. This is, essentially, a plural of majesty; and although in the Hebrew, as in other languages, the predicate, whether verb or adjective, conforms regularly to the subject in gender and number, yet the plural nouns that have a singular signification are construed with the singular; and especially is this the case with the word *Elohim*, the plural of majesty. Take, for instance, the first chapter in Genesis. "*Bereshith bara Elohim*," "In the beginning God created"; *Elohim* is in the plural, but the verb *bara*, he created, is in the singular. "*Vy-yomer Elohim*," and God said; the verb *yomer*, he said, is in the singular. "And God saw . . . And God divided . . . And God called . . . And God made . . . And God set them . . . And God blessed them"; in all these cases the plural noun *Elohim*, the plural of majesty, is construed with the verb in the singular.

The phrase, "Let us make man in our image," is usually regarded as being expressive of the purpose of the Almighty to effect His will; and, viewed in this light, is merely an instance of the use of the plural of majesty. But the traditional explanation of the phrase is that it means that God and the earth together made man; that is, that the earth brought man into existence by virtue of the power vested in her, in the same way as in the production of other living creatures, and then, that the Supreme Being endued him with an intelligent soul. Hence, in regard to his material part,

¹ Deut. x. 17.

the production of man is to be attributed to the earth and the spiritual and intelligent part of him to God.

This explanation is quite consistent with the text, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living soul."¹ For, when God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures,"² the animal part of man was also included; and for this reason the plural form, "Let us make man," was used. If it had been said, "I will make man," or, "Let man exist," as it was said, "Let there be light," it might have been inferred that the earth did not produce him, as a living creature, consisting of matter, but that he was entirely spiritual. And if, on the other hand, it had been said, "Let the earth bring forth man," it would have afforded ample scope for asserting the materiality of man in the same manner as that of all other living creatures which the earth produced. But, by using the expression, "Let us make man," a true idea of the matter is conveyed, namely, that God and the earth together made man, as a compound being; his material part proceeding from the earth, and his spiritual part directly from the Almighty. So that we may justly say that man is a compound creature, formed of flesh and spirit, partaking of heaven and earth, and consequently allied to both worlds.

¹ Gen. ii. 7.

² *Ibid.* i. 24.

XII

WE find the plural word *Elohim*, gods, used with reference to Moses, yet none of our Christian friends will pretend that Moses was a plurality. "And the anger of the Eternal was kindled against Moses, and He said, Is there not Aaron, thy brother, the Levite? . . . And he shall speak for thee unto the people; and he shall be, yea, he shall be to thee as a mouth, and thou shall be to him as a god (in the Hebrew text it is *Elohim*, gods)."¹ "And the Eternal said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god (literally, *Elohim*, gods) to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet."² The use of the plural word *Elohim*, as a plural of majesty, can no more be made to mean, when applied to the Almighty, that He is a plurality, than it can, when applied to Moses, be held to signify that the latter was a plurality.

There is either One God, or more than one. If there be more than one, if there be a plurality of Gods, then they should always be spoken of in the plural; and any use of the singular with reference to them would be misleading. There is a common enough form of expression, the "plural of majesty," by which one can speak and be spoken of in the plural, that deceives no one; but there is no recognized form of expression that can justify the use of words in the singular form for the purpose of conveying the idea of a plurality. If there be more than one God, then it must be con-

¹ Exod. iv. 14, 16.² *Ibid.* vii. 1.

fessed that the Old Testament is a book that has been written with intent to deceive; and this is a conclusion which no believer in its divine authority, whether Jew or non-Jew, will ever admit. This consideration alone is fatal to the proposition that there is a plurality of Gods.

Again, if we suppose, for the sake of argument, that there is more than one God; then how many of them are there? Two? Three? Or countless millions of them? If we admit the proposition that the Hebrew Scriptures reveal the existence of a plurality of Gods, what man can undertake to say how many, or how few, of them there are? The Christian limitation of their number to three is merely an adoption by Christians of the theories and speculations of a heathen philosopher; it is not founded on any declaration contained in the Jewish Scriptures; and even Christians have never claimed for the theology of Plato the authority of a divine revelation. If, for the sake of argument, we assume that the Hebrew Scriptures reveal the existence of a plurality of Gods, there is nothing in them that can justify the restriction of their number to three. The Christian system of three Gods is a purely Platonic proposition.

The Old Testament maintains that there is but One Sole God; and that beside Him there is no god. "Hear, O Israel, the Eternal, our God, the Eternal, is One."¹ "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me."² "Thus hath said the Eternal, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Eternal of Hosts, I am the first, and I am the last; and beside

¹ Deut. vi. 4.

² *Ibid.* xxxii. 39.

Me there is no god.”¹ “I am the Eternal, and there is none else; beside Me there is no god.”² “I am God, and there is no one else; I am God, and there is none like Me.”³ It is only by perverting, and misapplying, and falsely rendering the Jewish Scriptures that Christians are able to persuade themselves that their Platonic theory of a triumvirate of Gods is based upon the teachings of the Old Testament.

The first revelation of Himself given by God was made when He appeared to Abraham. “And when Abram was ninety and nine years old, the Eternal appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God (*El-Shaddai*); walk before me, and be thou perfect.”⁴ Here, the word *El*, God, is in the singular, and the sentence is constructed in the singular; so that there is neither a plurality nor a triumvirate of Gods to be found in this revelation. To the Hebrew patriarchs, then, the Eternal was revealed as a Unity, as One Sole God, the Almighty.

The next revelation of the Almighty’s being and quality was made to Moses. “And Moses said unto God, Behold, I come unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they say to me, What is His name? What shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I Will Be that I Will Be (*Eyeh asher Eyeh*); and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Will Be (*Eyeh*) hath sent me unto you.”⁵ The word *Eyeh* is the first person, singular, future tense, of the verb “to be”; so, here again, the Eternal revealed

¹ Isaiah xlv. 6.² *Ibid.* xlv. 5.³ *Ibid.* xlv. 9.⁴ Gen. xvii. 1.⁵ Exod. iii. 13, 14.

Himself as a Unity; and to Moses, then, He was known as One God, as the Being who will ever be, the Eternal.

“And God (*Elohim*, the plural of majesty) spoke unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Eternal. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of *El-Shaddai* (God Almighty), but by My name *the Eternal* I was not known to them. And I did also establish My covenant with them, to give unto them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they sojourned. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians compel to labor; and I have remembered My covenant. Therefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Eternal, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God (*Elohim* again, the plural of majesty); and ye shall know that I am the Eternal your God (plural again), who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land, concerning which I did lift up My hand to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for a heritage: I am the Eternal.”¹

It is a matter of common occurrence in the Hebrew Scriptures to find the singular form *El*, and the plural form *Elohim*, used in the same passages; and any one who would argue from thence the existence of an unlimited plurality in Unity, or of a trinity or a quartette, or of any other determinate number of gods in Unity,

¹ Exod. vi. 2-8.

would be simply perverting the meaning of the Jewish Scriptures, which maintain the existence of One God, the Eternal, to the exclusion of all other gods. "For the Eternal thy God (plural) is a consuming fire, even a watchful God (singular)."¹ "For a merciful God (singular) is the Eternal thy God (plural)."² "For I the Eternal thy God (plural) am a jealous God (singular)."³ "For the Eternal thy God (plural) is in the midst of thee, a mighty and terrible God (singular)."⁴ "Know then that the Eternal thy God (plural) He is *the God (ha-Elohim)*, the faithful God (*ha-El*)."⁵ In Hebrew, as in other languages, the definite article, employed with a noun, limits its application, and when used with an appellative—that is, applied by way of eminence to a particular person—becomes a kind of proper name. The plural expression *ha-Elohim* conveys the same meaning as the singular *ha-El*, namely, that of *the only, the true God*; and both expressions mean that the Eternal is the One Being who is in truth God the Creator, and that all other deities are false, powerless, and imaginary beings, and therefore not God.

None of our Christian friends will pretend that the Jews of the present day are believers in a plurality of Gods, and yet the plural form *Elohim* is constantly used in their prayer-books; and in their prayer-books, as in their Scriptures, we find the singular *El* and the plural *Elohim* used in the same passages. "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God (plural), and God (plural) of our fathers; God (plural) of Abraham, God (plural)

¹ Deut. iv. 24.² *Ibid.* iv. 31.³ *Ibid.* v. 9.⁴ *Ibid.* vii. 21.⁵ *Ibid.* vii. 9.

of Isaac, and God (plural) of Jacob; *the God (ha-El)*, great, mighty, and tremendous, the most high God (singular)!" "Remember us unto life, O God (singular), the King, who delightest in life. O write us in the Book of Life, for Thy own sake, O God (*Elohim*) of life, who art the living God (*El*)." The plural *Elohim* is simply a plural of majesty; and Christians may as well argue that the use of the plural forms "you are," and "you have," in the English language, mean, when applied to the individual John Smith, that he must be a plurality, as that the plural *Elohim* signifies, when applied to the Almighty, that He is a plurality. The singular signification of *Elohim* is moreover shown by its being construed with the verb or other predicate in the singular.

The next question was, Is Deuteronomy vi. 4 possibly rendered, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is *our Gods*, the Lord is *united*"?

The Hebrew text reads, "Hear, O Israel, the Eternal, our God (*Eloheanu*, the plural of majesty), the Eternal (is) One (*Echad*)." The cardinal number "One" is expressed in Hebrew by the word "echad"; and the question asked by my correspondent shows to what straits our Christian friends are put in their efforts to find in the Hebrew Scriptures even the faintest shadow of support for their Platonic theory of a triumvirate of Gods.

It is often difficult to answer seriously, and without banter, the questions asked by our Christian friends; so childish and inconsequent are they. We have, in the Jewish Scriptures, almost countless repetitions of the declarations of the Unity of God; we are told,

times almost without number, that the Eternal is the Only God, and that there is none like Him, that beside Him there is no god, and no one else; we have Moses declaring to the people of Israel, "Unto thee it was shown, that thou mightest know, that the Eternal He (is) *the God (ha-Elohim)*, that is, *the only, the true God*); there is none else beside Him";¹ we have him repeating, "Know therefore this day, and reflect in thy heart, that the Eternal He (is) *the God (ha-Elohim)* in the heavens above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else";² we have the Almighty declaring, through Moses, "See, now, that I, even I, am He, and there is no God with Me";³ and when we have Moses proclaiming the same truth of the Unity of God in the words, "Hear, O Israel, the Eternal, our God, the Eternal is One," the question is asked by a learned Christian minister whether this is not intended to mean that there are more Gods than one, and that they are associated together.

The verse in question cannot be so rendered. "Thus hath said the Eternal, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Eternal of Hosts, I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no god."⁴ "I am the Eternal, and there is none else; beside Me there is no god."⁴ There is no plurality, no triumvirate, no association of Gods; the Hebrew Scriptures inculcate the absolute Unity of God; and they teach us, in the plainest and most emphatic language in which the sublime truth can be expressed, that the Eternal is the One Supreme Being, the Only God and the

¹ Deut. iv. 35.² *Ibid.* iv. 39.³ *Ibid.* xxxii. 39.⁴ Isaiah xlv. 6.⁵ *Ibid.* xlv. 5.

Only Saviour, the Creator of all things, and that He Alone is endued with infinite perfection, power, wisdom, knowledge, and goodness.

My correspondent can find an answer to his question in the New Testament. It is related there that "one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he (Jesus) had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord; And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. . . . And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is One God; and there is none other but He. . . . And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." ¹

My correspondent can ask himself whether this passage in the New Testament can be rendered, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our Gods, the Lord is united"; and, as a believer in the word of Jesus and in the truth of the New Testament, he will undoubtedly find himself compelled to answer that he is bound to accept the evidence of the one and the testimony of the other as satisfactory and conclusive proof that there is but one God, and none other but Him.

¹ Mark xii. 28-30, 32, 34.

XIII

THE last questions were, "How do you account for the wonderful change in the Pharisee Saul of Tarsus into Paul the Missionary of Jesus Christ? How do you account for the spread of Christianity? How was the Apostle Paul able to foretell that Israel *as a nation* would never accept Christ until His future return as the Messiah in glory?"

These questions, like several of the previous ones, are but side-issues; and they are only deserving of attention because Christians attach a great deal of importance to the supposed miraculous conversion of Paul, and to the spread of their religion, as leading arguments in favor of its truth. I might ask my correspondent how he accounts for the thousands of bright intellects who, born and brought up as Christians, have found themselves unable to accept the doctrines of Christianity, and have lapsed into infidelity? how he accounts for the hundreds of illustrious men who have abandoned Protestantism in order to join the church of Rome? and how he accounts for the spread of Mahometanism, which made more progress in a hundred years than Christianity did in a thousand? I might ask him these and many more questions that it would be interesting to have him answer; but they would be no more material to the points at issue between the Jew and the Christian than are his questions. The conversion of Paul is no more proof of the truth of Christianity than is the

apostasy of any other Jew; and the conversion of any number of Jews to Christianity is no more evidence of its truth than were the frequent lapses of the Israelites into idolatry proofs of the divinity of the gods whom their heathen neighbors worshipped.

It did not require any special degree of discernment on the part of Paul to predict that nothing less than the return of Christ as the Messiah in glory would be required to make the Jews believe in either his Messiahship or divinity. Any Jew with any knowledge of his religion and people could easily prophesy the same thing.

According to the New Testament, Paul was converted to Christianity by a splendid apparition of Jesus, who struck him to the ground by the glory of his appearance; but by the Nazarene Christians his conversion was ascribed to a different cause. They said that, being a man of ability and of some note, he demanded the daughter of the High Priest in marriage, and, being refused, that his violent and revengeful temper drove him to join their sect. However this may be, and whatever the motive of his apostasy, it is evident from the New Testament that he was regarded by the Jewish Christians with suspicion, and that he taught a doctrine different to that promulgated by the other Apostles, the companions of Jesus.

The accounts of the conversion of Paul, and of his life and movements afterwards, that are given in the New Testament, are full of discrepancies and contradictions that are fatal to the authenticity of the narrative and to the character of the book as an inspired writing.

It appears from the New Testament that Paul had been prominent and active in the persecution of the Christians at Jerusalem, entering into every house, and dragging men and women to prison.¹ Then, still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Jesus, he applied to the High Priest for letters authorizing him to go to Damascus, and to bring any Christian men and women whom he might find there bound to Jerusalem.² What jurisdiction the High Priest at Jerusalem had over Christians at Damascus is not explained; the writers and compilers of the New Testament may perhaps have thought that the High Priest wielded over the people of the East the same authority that the Pope of Rome exercised over the nations of the West in the days of the Inquisition; but they might as well have made Paul obtain letters from the High Priest empowering him to arrest and bring the Christian residents of Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome as prisoners to Jerusalem for punishment and death, as they did for the Christians of Damascus. Even in Jerusalem itself the High Priest was powerless to judge and condemn; the offender had to be brought before the representative of Roman authority for trial and punishment. It was before the tribunal of Pilate that Jesus was led, and Paul was sent before that of Felix; and even the New Testament shows how scant was the consideration that the Roman conquerors at any time paid to complaints based on violations of the religious laws, practices and sentiments of the Jews, unless some danger to Roman power were also apparent.

¹ Acts xxii. 4.² *Ibid.*, ix. 1, 2.

While Paul was on his way to Damascus, and when near that city, suddenly, about noon, there shone round about him and his travelling companions a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun; and they all fell to the ground, and he heard the voice of Jesus speaking to him.¹

The New Testament gives conflicting accounts of what then happened. Thus, we are told in one chapter that the men who were journeying with Paul “stood speechless, *hearing a voice*, but seeing no man”;² and in another, that they “saw indeed the light, and were afraid, *but they heard not the voice of him that spake*”³ to Paul. In one chapter it is related that when Paul asked Jesus what he should do, Jesus said to him, “Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told to thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.”⁴ This is corroborated by the account given in another chapter;⁵ but, according to a third account, Paul received his instructions from Jesus at the time and place of his apparition. “And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins,

¹ Acts xxii. 6; xxvi, 13, 14.

² *Ibid.*, ix. 7.

³ *Ibid.*, xxii. 9.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xxii. 10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ix. 6.

and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”¹

Paul is said to have been rendered sightless by the glory of the light,² but the men who were with him do not appear to have been affected by it in the same way, for he was led by them to Damascus, to the house of one Judas, where he remained for three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink. Ananias, a Christian disciple at Damascus, was instructed by Jesus, in a vision, to go to the house of Judas, and restore his sight to Paul. Upon Ananias putting his hands upon Paul, and addressing him, “immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then (that is, upon that very occasion) was Saul certain days with the disciples which were in Damascus. And straightway (that is, without any delay) he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.”³

We can only conclude from this account of his conversion that Paul, immediately after his sight was restored, and he was baptized, began to preach Christianity at Damascus. And the chapter from which the last quotation has been taken goes on to relate that all those who heard him “were amazed and said: Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt in Damascus, prov-

¹ Acts xxvi. 15-18.

² *Ibid.*, ix. 8; xxii. 11.

³ *Ibid.*, ix. 9-20.

ing that this is very Christ. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him; but their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians; but they went about to slay him. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.”¹

Nothing could be plainer, from the foregoing account, than that Paul, immediately after his conversion, began preaching at Damascus, and when, after many days there, his life was threatened, that he fled for refuge to Jerusalem, and preached boldly in that city, coming in and going out with the other disciples, until, by reason of his disputes, not with the Jews, but with the Grecians, he was compelled to fly from that place also. And then comes the noteworthy

¹ Acts ix. 21-31.

statement that after the other disciples had sent him away, out of Palestine, the Christian churches in that country had rest, and were edified, and were multiplied. Paul was therefore clearly the disturbing element in the Christian community; they evidently got on much better without him than with him; and since, after they sent him away, the churches had rest, we must conclude that the only persecution they suffered was that which they endured at his hands.

In order, however, to make the narrative we are noticing at all intelligible, we are obliged to suppose that there was a fierce persecution by the Jews of the Christians at Jerusalem; that Paul had been the savage and relentless agent in it that he is represented in the New Testament to have been; and that the Jewish High Priest had, what he did not have, namely, jurisdiction over the Christians at Damascus. Assuming all these pretended facts to be true, then we are enabled to understand how it may have happened that the reports of the imaginary persecution at Jerusalem should have reached the Christians at Damascus, and that they should have received warnings from their brethren at Jerusalem of Paul's supposed mission to Damascus, and of the object of his coming, so that, when they heard him preaching Jesus, they were astonished, and asked one another the question mentioned. We can also understand how, after the return of Paul to Jerusalem, the Christian disciples at the latter city, who knew him as their cruel persecutor, should have been afraid of him, and have refused to receive him as one of themselves, until he was vouched for by Barnabas; provided, of course, that the duration

of his stay at Damascus had not been long enough to have enabled the reports of his conversion and bold preaching at that place to have preceded him and reached the ears of the Christians at Jerusalem. The chapter in the New Testament from which the preceding quotations have been taken states that he was "certain days" with the disciples at Damascus, and then, after "many days" were fulfilled, that the Jews at Damascus sought to kill him, and he made his escape from there and returned to Jerusalem. If he were "many days" at Damascus, say twelve months, or even six months, "preaching boldly in the name of Jesus," then it is impossible to believe that the Christians at Jerusalem should not have become fully advised of his conversion; and, instead of being afraid of him, and refusing to believe that he had become a disciple, they should have been eager to receive him as one of the champions of their faith. We shall presently find that he was no less than three years at Damascus; so that the New Testament draws heavily upon the credulity of its readers in this respect.

In other ways, again, the narrative is conflicting and unintelligible. For instance: unless the alleged persecution of the Christians by the Jews in Jerusalem were of the mildest character, or wholly imaginary, we are at a loss to understand how it should happen that Paul, fleeing for his life from the Jews at Damascus, should go to Jerusalem, of all places, for safety. One would suppose that if Jerusalem were the hot-bed of persecution it is represented in the New Testament to have been, it would be the very last place in which he would seek refuge from Jewish wrath. It would

be the very place to which the Jews of Damascus would endeavor to send him for punishment. But not only did Paul go to Jerusalem, as to an asylum or sanctuary, for security; but, after he became known there as a convert to Christianity, he went about freely, and preached boldly in the name of Jesus; and his disputes were, not with the Jews, but with the Grecians; and it was these Gentiles, and not the Jews, who went about to slay him. And, to cap the climax, we are told that when the other Christian disciples sent him out of the country, then the Christian churches throughout Palestine had rest, and were edified, and were multiplied. We thus see that the narrative in question is altogether inconsistent with the tales of the alleged persecution of the Christians by the Jews; like nearly everything else in the New Testament, it cannot bear the slightest criticism; and there is no verisimilitude or appearance of truth about it.

XIV

By the narrative we noticed in the last number we are clearly informed that Paul, immediately after his conversion and baptism, began preaching at Damascus, and, when his life was threatened there, that he fled to Jerusalem, and preached boldly in that city until, by reason of his disputes with the Grecians, the Christian brethren at Jerusalem brought him to Cesarea, and sent him to Tarsus. It is interesting to compare this account with the other narratives in the New Testament concerning him.

In one of these Paul is made to relate the story of his conversion to King Agrippa. After reciting to the King the instructions given him by Jesus at the time of his apparition, quoted in the last number, he continues thus:—"Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."¹ Here, again, we have the statement that Paul rendered an immediate obedience to the commands of Jesus, and entered at once upon the performance of his mission, and preached first at Damascus, and then at Jerusalem. So far, this agrees with the first narrative, but then proceeds to differ from it in this respect: that while, according to the first, the Christian disciples at Jerusalem brought Paul to Cesarea, and sent him out of Palestine, to Tarsus, in Cilicia; we are, in this second account, told that Paul, after leaving Jerusalem, remained in Judea, and preached throughout all the coasts of Judea, before going forth to the Gentiles. The two accounts are therefore conflicting in this respect.

Let us try a third account. "And one Ananias . . . came . . . and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarri-

¹ Acts xxvi. 19, 20.

est thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord. And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the Temple, I was in a trance; And saw him (Jesus) saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. . . . And he said unto me, Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”¹ This third account differs from the first two, since there is no mention in it of Paul having preached the new religion at Damascus before returning to Jerusalem; but he appears from it to have made his way back to the latter city immediately after having received his instructions from Ananias. At Jerusalem he must have preached Jesus, since the people there refused to receive his testimony concerning him: on which account he was, while in a trance, told by Jesus to get quickly out of Jerusalem, and to go far away unto the Gentiles. It is singular that the other accounts make no mention of what must have been to all Christians, as well as to Paul himself, an event of the most transcendent importance, namely, the appearance of their Lord Jesus to him in the Temple; and their silence about it, if they believed it, is not explainable. Nor does Paul appear to have been over-zealous in obeying the command of his new Lord, to go far away unto the Gentiles, since we are elsewhere told by him that, after leaving Jerusalem, he preached throughout all the coasts of Judea before going to the Gentiles.

We will now take a fourth account given, as were

¹ Acts xxii. 12-18, 21.

two of the previous ones, by Paul himself,—at least, they are attributed to him by the New Testament; and we will find that it conflicts with and contradicts all the others. “When it pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord’s brother. *Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.* Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia: And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ; But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.¹ . . . Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.”²

Now, this is an account that contradicts all the previous ones; and it cannot be reconciled with them. According to it, and Paul swears that he is this time telling the truth, he did not, immediately after being converted and baptized, begin to preach Christ at Damascus, as related in the first and second narratives; nor did he return at once to Jerusalem, and offer there his testimony concerning Jesus, as mentioned in the third account; but, without conferring with flesh and blood, that is, without holding any communication

¹ Galat. i. 15-23.

² *Ibid.* ii. 1.

with any person, he went away into Arabia. How long he remained in Arabia is not stated; and, after an indefinite sojourn there, he returned to Damascus, and was there for three years, before going back to Jerusalem. When he did go to Jerusalem, it was to see Peter, and he remained with him only fifteen days; and then he went away to Syria and Cilicia, without seeing any of the other Apostles at Jerusalem, except James, the brother of Jesus; and without becoming known by face to the Christian churches of Judea, that is, without doing any of the preaching at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea that we are in the other narratives told that he did do, before going to the Gentiles. Fourteen years were spent by Paul in preaching the Christian faith in Syria and Cilicia; and then he went again to Jerusalem, being accompanied on this occasion by Barnabas and Titus.

These contradictory statements and narratives are a sample of the kind of thing that is given us in the New Testament; and yet our Christian friends would have us believe that it is an inspired book, and the Word of God! To call it the Word of God is derogatory to the Majesty of Heaven.

From the mention of the name of Barnabas in the first and last of the narratives we have been noticing and from the fact that, in the last of them, Paul swears that when he first went to Jerusalem, after his conversion, he remained there for fifteen days only, and then went away to Syria and Cilicia without becoming known by face to the Christian churches in Judea, it must have been on the occasion of the second visit of Paul to Jerusalem, after his conversion, that Barna-

bas had to vouch for him to the Christian brethren of that city before they would receive him as one of their number. For three years did Paul preach boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus, confounding the Jews, and proving that he is very Christ and the Son of God; for fourteen more years did Paul zealously labor in the cause of Christianity in the regions of Syria and Cilicia; and then, after these seventeen years of ministration in the name of Jesus, when this wonderful Apostle and missionary of Christ came to Jerusalem, and essayed to join himself to the Christian disciples there, they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple, until Barnabas took him, and brought him to the Apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. In more than one way does the New Testament furnish us with evidence of the insignificance of Paul in the estimation of his contemporaries: for we are also told in it that when he was afterwards taken to Rome and sent for the principal Jews there, to explain to them how innocent he was of the charges made against him, they answered that they had heard nothing about him.¹

It will be noticed that, in offering to the Apostles at Jerusalem his testimony concerning the conversion of Paul to Christianity, Barnabas spoke only of his preaching at Damascus and said nothing about his fourteen years' work as an Apostle and missionary of Jesus in Syria and Cilicia, which would lead us to conclude either that the fourteen years of ministration

¹ Acts xxviii. 21.

in these provinces were not worthy of mention or else that it was before Paul went to these countries that Barnabas vouched for him at Jerusalem. But since we are told that after Barnabas bore witness for Paul, the latter was with the Apostles coming in and going out at Jerusalem, and that he spoke boldly in the name of Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians, until the Christian brethren brought him to Cesarea, and sent him away to Tarsus, we must, in adopting the second conclusion, also come to the further one that Paul was not telling the truth when he swore that he was unknown by face to the Christian churches in Judea until after his fourteen years' sojourn in Syria and Cilicia.

In short, the different narratives in the New Testament about Paul's conversion and work, three of which are given by himself, are so irreconcilable with one another that any one of them cannot be accepted without denying the truth of the others; and no value can therefore be attached to any of them. If Paul really made the conflicting statements that are put into his mouth by the New Testament, then he was incapable of telling a straight story; and if he did not make them, then they are fabrications. In either case they show Paul's statements to be undeserving of belief; and they are fatal to the character of the New Testament as an inspired writing. /

My correspondent asks how Paul was able to foretell that Israel, as a nation, would never accept Christ until his future return as the Messiah in glory; and if we examine any of the arguments by which Paul, according to the New Testament, confounded the Jews,

and proved Jesus to be God, we will find in them a sufficient answer to the question asked.

For an example of Paul's style of reasoning we will go to his Epistle to the Galatians, whom he calls the "foolish Galatians."¹ In it he says, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."² Paul's argument in this place is drawn from the use of the word "seed" in the singular number; and, because it is in the singular, he tells the "foolish Galatians" that the word *seed* must mean *one individual*, and not many, and that this individual is Christ. Therefore, according to Paul, the expression "seed of Abraham" means Christ; and the promises made to Abraham and his seed were promises intended for Jesus Christ. •

It may, incidentally, be asked why, from the Christian point of view, there should be any occasion for the Almighty to make promises to Christ, and especially promises of the kind that were made to the descendants of Abraham? In Christian doctrine Christ is a god, and one of a triumvirate of Gods; he is co-existent and co-eternal with the Almighty, and he is the creator of the world and the ruler of heaven and earth; and for one God to offer to another God who, in Christian belief, is not inferior to Him in dignity, power, and glory, promises of the kind made to mere mortals like Abraham and his descendants is certainly most incongruous and inconsistent. The promises are not suitable to the character, grandeur, and dominion of a God such as Christians believe their Lord Jesus Christ to be.

¹ Galat. iii. 1.

² *Ibid.* iii. 16.

If we now refer to any of the passages in Genesis from which Paul quoted, we will see what a travesty upon his text his argument is. "And the Eternal appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto *thy seed* will I give this land."¹ Therefore, according to Paul's argument, it was not to the children of Israel, but to Jesus Christ, whom Christians believe to be the creator of the universe, and the Lord of heaven and earth, that the Almighty promised the land of Canaan as a possession and an inheritance.

XV

"AND I will make *thy seed* as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall *thy seed* also be numbered."² The Apostle Paul claims that the words "thy seed" mean Christ; therefore, according to his argument, it is not the people of Israel, but Christ, whom the Almighty has promised to make as numberless as the dust of the earth.

"And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward the heaven, and count the stars, if thou be able to count them; and He said unto him, So shall *thy seed* be."³ Therefore, according to Paul's argument, it is Christ, and not the children of Israel, whom the Eternal promised to make as countless as the stars in heaven.

"And He said unto Abram, Know of a surety that *thy seed* shall be a stranger in a land which is not *theirs*, and they will make *them* serve, and they will

¹ Gen. xii. 7.² *Ibid.* xiii. 16.³ *Ibid.* xv. 5.

afflict *them* four hundred years.”¹ Therefore, according to Paul, it was not the children of Israel, but Jesus Christ and a nation of Christs who were strangers in the land of Egypt, and served the Egyptians, and were afflicted by them for 400 years.

“And God said unto Abraham, But thou, for thy part, shalt keep My covenant, thou, and *thy seed* after thee, in their generations. This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and between you, and between *thy seed* after thee: Every man-child among you shall be circumcised.”² Therefore, according to Paul’s argument, it was not with the children of Israel, but with Christ, and with generations of Christs, that the Almighty established the covenant of circumcision.

“By Myself have I sworn, saith the Eternal, since because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thy only one; That I will greatly bless thee, and I will exceedingly multiply *thy seed* as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and *thy seed* shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in *thy seed* shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice.”³ According to the argument of Paul, the words “thy seed” mean Christ; and, therefore, it was Christ, and not the Israelites, whom the Eternal promised to multiply as the stars of heaven, and as the sand upon the sea-shore.

Paul’s argument about the words “thy seed” is a sample of the kind of reasoning we find everywhere throughout the New Testament. In its pages expression

¹ Gen. xv. 13.

² *Ibid.* xvii. 9, 10.

³ *Ibid.* xxii. 16-18.

is given to the most daring perversions, and to the most ridiculous misapplications, of the words of the Hebrew Scriptures that the mind of man can possibly conceive.

In commenting, in a previous number, upon the 110th Psalm, I gave some consideration to the argument advanced by Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, concerning the pretended change made by the Almighty in the order of the priesthood, from that of Aaron to that of Christ; and showed how palpably erroneous his contention was. In connection with the same subject Paul is represented as saying: "For this Melchisedec, King of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils."¹

In accordance with this passage, our Christian friends regard Malkizedek, King of Salem, as a most mysterious personage, because Paul describes him as such, and because he had maintained the worship of God, and was at once king and priest; and they consider the assumed fact that to him Abraham reverently gave tithes of all the spoil that he had taken in his expedition against the four kings, and received his

¹ Hebrews vii. 1-4.

solemn blessing, as a proof of how high the rank and dignity of Malkizedek must have been. But did Abraham give tithes to Malkizedek; or was it the latter who offered them to Abraham?

The passage in Genesis referring to the event must be familiar to all my readers. "And the King of Sodom went out to meet him (Abraham), after his return from smiting Kedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. And Malkizedek, King of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he was a priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, the Possessor of heaven and earth. And blessed be the Most High God, who hath delivered thy enemies into thy hand; and he gave him tithes of all. And the King of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and the goods take to thyself. And Abram said to the King of Sodom, I have lifted up my hand unto the Lord, the Most High God, the Possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine; lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich; Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre—these may take their portion."¹

Nothing could be simpler than the construction of the foregoing sentences. "And he blessed him . . . and he gave him tithes of all"; that is, "And he (Malkizedek) blessed him (Abraham) . . . and he (Malkizedek) gave him (Abraham) tithes of all." To

¹ Gen. xiv. 17-24.

argue, as Paul does, that while it was Malkizedek who blessed Abraham, yet it was the latter who gave tithes to the former, is to violate the most elementary rules of grammatical construction. If the Hebrew Scriptures are to be interpreted in the way in which Paul and our Christian friends explain and apply them, then was the Old Testament the most useless book that ever was written. For any doctrine, no matter how impious or absurd it may be, can be proved from it in that way.

Even if, for the sake of argument, we were to suppose that the grammatical construction of the sentences permits us to arrive at the conclusion that it may have been Abraham who gave tithes of the spoils to Malkizedek, the context would effectually disprove such an inference. For, in order that Abraham could have given tithes of the spoils to Malkizedek, he must himself have taken or accepted them from the king of Sodom. He could not give what he did not have; he could not have given them, unless he had first accepted them. And since we are expressly told that Abraham absolutely refused to take any part of the spoils, then had he no portion of them to give away. "I have lifted up my hand unto the Lord, the Most High God, the Possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine; lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich,"¹ was the reply of the proud Hebrew prince to the offers of the grateful kings. And we cannot suppose that Abraham gave tithes to Malkizedek without also

¹ Gen. xiv. 22, 23.

assuming that he had first accepted part of the spoils from the king of Sodom and had violated his oath to the Almighty.

However important a personage Malkizedek may have been, Abraham must be deemed to have been a still greater one, since he accomplished what the former dared not even attempt; and the service Abraham rendered in defeating Kedorlaomer and his allies must have been of benefit to the king of Salem as well as to the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, in relieving them all from dreaded and powerful enemies, since Malkizedek went out with the king of Sodom to meet the victorious Hebrew, and to receive him with hospitality, and bless him for what he had done. And then, when Malkizedek would have given Abraham tithes of all, the king of Sodom, in the excess of his gratitude, exclaimed, "Give me the persons, and the goods take to thyself." And if Malkizedek was a priest of the Most High God, it must be remembered that Abraham was also one, and known by all the people among whom he dwelt to be under the special protection of heaven. "He suffered no man to oppress them; yea, He reproved kings for their sake, saying, Touch not My anointed, and do My prophets no harm."¹ "Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, the Possessor of heaven and earth,"² was the language of Malkizedek; "God is with thee in all that thou doest,"³ said Abimelech, king of Gerar; and "A prince of God thou art among us,"⁴ exclaimed the children of Heth.

¹ 1 Chron. xvi. 21, 22.

² Gen. xiv. 19.

³ *Ibid.* xxi. 22.

⁴ *Ibid.* xxiii. 6.

One of the principal reasons why Christians regard Malkizedek as a mysterious personage appears to be because he was a worshipper and priest of the One true God; but this, surely, is not an adequate reason for surrounding him with the halo of mystery with which Paul has invested him. It would be much more surprising to learn that the knowledge and worship of the Almighty had been entirely lost in the mists of idolatry at a time when Noah was scarcely dead, and Shem was still living, than that Abraham was not the only man of his day who maintained the worship of the true God. Idolatry may have prevailed in many places; but there must also have been some others where prayers and supplications were still addressed to no other deity than the God of Noah and of Shem.

There is a tradition among the Jews that Shem was the Malkizedek who went forth to meet Abraham after his victory over the kings; and that Shem, like his father Noah, was a just and perfect man and the faithful servant of God. The pious character of Shem is attested by the invocation of Noah: "Blessed be the Eternal, the God of Shem. . . . May God enlarge the boundaries of Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem."¹ Shem was 100 years old when his son Arpachshad was born, and he lived for 500 years after the birth of Arpachshad;² and as Abraham was born 290 years after Arpachshad, and lived 175 years, Shem was not only living in the days of Abraham, but he survived Abraham by a period of 35 years.³ There is therefore ample possibility that the tradition

¹ Gen. ix. 26, 27.² *Ibid.* xi. 10, 11.³ *Ibid.* xi. and xxv. 7.

that Shem was Malkizedek was well-founded; and God may have fulfilled the blessing of Noah, and permitted His Spirit to dwell in the tents of Shem; so that Shem may justly have earned the title of Malkizedek, which means "righteous king," and the city of his residence may well have been called Salem, or Peace, and he himself have been known as a priest of the Most High God.

Whoever Malkizedek may have been,—whether he were Shem, or some other pious servant of God,—what are we to think of the sanity and credibility of any person who should describe him as Paul has done, as a man "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually?"¹ What are we to think of the claims of the New Testament to be the Word of God, when we find in it a statement of this kind presented for our serious consideration and belief? If Malkizedek had neither father, nor mother, nor descent, neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but was made like unto Christ, the Son of God, then Christians should not believe him to have been a man; he should, in Christian belief, be a divine being, eternal and immortal, a God, a *Fourth God*, whom Christians have no right to ignore, and whom they should worship even as they do Jesus Christ.

If the evidence of the New Testament and of the Apostle Paul is to be received as to Jesus, then their testimony should be deemed equally credible and conclusive with reference to Malkizedek. It is the

¹ Heb. vii. 3.

same authority that is speaking in both cases; and Christians cannot consistently accept it with respect to Christ and ignore it in regard to Malkizedek. And since it is declared in the New Testament and by the Apostle Paul that Malkizedek was made like unto the Son of God, one of them could not have been a god and the other only a man. Being made like unto one another, they must necessarily have been, either both of them gods, or both of them men.

XVI

THE instances we have given of Paul's style of argument are examples of the kind of reasoning to be found throughout the whole of the Epistles ascribed to him; and it is upon these Epistles that nearly the whole of Systematic Christianity is founded. It is no wonder that Paul, who was a learned man, and therefore must have known that he was wilfully, and in a ridiculous manner, perverting the meaning and application of the Hebrew Scriptures, should predict that the Israelites would never accept Christ as the Messiah until his future return in glory. Paul's prediction was an admission by him that the pretensions of Christianity were utterly opposed to the truths of Judaism, and would, on that account, never be received by the Jews.

The last question remaining to be noticed is, "How do you account for the spread of Christianity?"

My correspondent might as well have asked me how I account for the propagation of Mahometanism;

for the diffusion of the one religion no more proves than does the dissemination of the other, that either of them is from God. If the spread of Christianity is to be accounted a proof of its divine origin; then the same argument can, with equal, if not greater, force, be advanced in favor of Mahometanism. If the Christian should reply to this, by ascribing the success of Mahometanism to the sword; the Mahometan might answer, with truth, that many more nations embraced Islamism voluntarily than there were who freely received Christianity; and he might remind the Christian how much Christianity owed to the accession of Constantine, and to Charlemagne, and that the monks were assisted by soldiers to convert to Christianity almost every nation in Europe. In very truth, of all the religions that the earth has known, not one has ever been the cause of shedding more innocent blood than has Christianity; that Christianity which is supposed to preach universal love, and to command its followers to live in peace.

Among the Jews Christianity was a failure. The Apostles met with such poor success among the Jews that they soon quitted Judea, and went to the Gentiles, who were accustomed to listen to marvellous tales of the kind the Apostles brought them. The idea of God having a son by a woman did not shock the Gentiles, for they believed all their demi-gods to have been so begotten; and their poems were filled with accounts of the exploits and sufferings of these heroes, who were rewarded by being raised from earth to heaven, as Jesus was said to have been. These tales were not disrelished by the common people, though

they were laughed at by the wise and learned among the Gentiles. Their mythological fables had been a subject of ridicule to the Greek and Roman philosophers for centuries before the time of Jesus; and Paul was derided by the philosophers of Athens when he preached to them about Jesus being the Son of God, as telling them a story similar to those of their own mythology.

Among the Gentiles, the church of Christ was not, at the first, gathered from the Academy or the Lyceum, but from the lower classes, from simple and unlearned men and credulous women. The first teachers of Christianity met with little or no success among the intelligent and educated; and even the Christian fathers tell us that the greater part of their congregations consisted of women and children, slaves and beggars. It was only after the name and divine attributes of the *Logos* of Plato had been confirmed by the Gospel of St. John, and the *Logos* had been revealed to the Gentile world as the sacred object of Christian worship, and the theological system of Plato had been made the basis of Christian doctrine, that Christianity began to make converts among the educated Gentiles.

The principal cause of the adoption of Christianity by the Greeks and Romans was, undoubtedly, the want of a better religion, which had been experienced by their philosophers, and, generally, by all their educated classes, for hundreds of years before the commencement of the Christian era. The philosophers of Greece and Rome had outgrown their polytheism; and even before the time of Plato, who flourished 400 years before the birth of Jesus, they had been striving

to invent a more rational theology, and, in so doing, had diffused around them an ever-increasing dissatisfaction with the popular worship; so that, when Christianity made its appearance, there were great numbers of educated people who were prepared to abandon heathenism and embrace a more spiritual faith, which Christianity was. And we have already seen that the philosophy of the Gentiles favored the spread of the new religion and dictated its doctrines; and that the Triad of the philosophical schools became the Trinity of the Christian system.

In discussing the celebrated five causes assigned by him for the growth of the Christian church, Gibbon states that the "sullen obstinacy with which the Jews maintained their peculiar rites and unsocial manners seemed to mark them out a distinct species of men, who boldly professed, or who faintly disguised, their implacable hatred to the rest of human-kind. . . . The descendants of Abraham were flattered by the opinion that they alone were the heirs of the covenant; and they were apprehensive of diminishing the value of their inheritance by sharing it too easily with the strangers of the earth. . . . The obligation of preaching to the Gentiles the faith of Moses had never been inculcated as a precept of the law, nor were the Jews inclined to impose it on themselves as a voluntary duty. . . . Their peculiar distinctions of days, of meats, and a variety of trivial though burdensome observances, were so many objects of disgust and aversion for the other nations, to whose habits and prejudices they were diametrically opposite. The painful and even dangerous rite of circumcision was

alone capable of repelling a willing proselyte from the door of the synagogue.”¹

And, speaking of the doctrine of a future life, Gibbon says: “We might naturally expect that a principle so essential to religion would have been revealed in the clearest terms to the chosen people of Palestine, and that it might safely have been intrusted to the hereditary priesthood of Aaron. It is incumbent on us to adore the mysterious dispensations of Providence when we discover that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is omitted in the Law of Moses; it is darkly insinuated by the prophets; and during the long period which elapsed between the Egyptian and the Babylonian servitudes, the hopes as well as fears of the Jews appear to have been confined within the narrow compass of the present life. After Cyrus had permitted the exiled nations to return into the Promised Land, and after Ezra had restored the ancient records of their religion, two celebrated sects, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, insensibly arose at Jerusalem. The former, selected from the more opulent and distinguished ranks of society, were strictly attached to the literal sense of the Mosaic law, and they piously rejected the immortality of the soul, as an opinion that received no countenance from the Divine Book, which they revered as the only rule of their faith. To the authority of Scripture the Pharisees added that of traditions; and they accepted, under the name of traditions, several speculative tenets from the philosophy or religion of the Eastern nations. The doctrines of fate or predestination, of angels or spirits, and of a

¹ Gibbon's "Rome," vol. 2 ch. xv. (Bohn, 1854).

future state of rewards and punishments, were in the number of these new articles of belief; and as the Pharisees, by the austerity of their manners, had drawn into their party the body of the Jewish people, the immortality of the soul became the prevailing sentiment of the synagogue, under the reign of the Asmonean princes and pontiffs. The temper of the Jews was incapable of contenting itself with such a cold and languid assent as might satisfy the mind of a polytheist: and, as soon as they admitted the idea of a future state, they embraced it with the zeal which has always formed the characteristic of the nation. Their zeal, however, added nothing to its evidence, or even probability; and it was still necessary that the doctrine of life and immortality, which had been dictated by nature, approved by reason, and received by superstition, should obtain the sanction of divine truth from the authority and example of Christ.”¹

It is impossible for a Hebrew to read the eloquent pages of Gibbon without noting, in nearly every reference made by him to the Jews and their religion, the bitter prejudice and animosity that spring from Christian ignorance of the principles and teachings of Judaism, and from Christian inability to either comprehend or believe in its broad, humane, and tolerant spirit. The same bitterness of feeling that is displayed by Gibbon is exhibited in the works of all other Christian writers; and they are often insensible of its appearance in their own writings, while deprecating it in those of others. Thus, Milman finds himself compelled to apologize for Gibbon, of whom he says: “His mind,

¹ Gibbon's “Rome,” vol. 2, pp. 26–28 (Bohn, 1854).

notwithstanding its boasted liberality, was by no means exempt from the old vulgar prejudices against the Jews; heightened, perhaps, by his unfriendly feeling, not much more philosophical, to the religion from which Christianity took its rise"; and yet Milman habitually shows the same bigotry and prejudice, and the same preconceived opinions against Judaism and the Jews, that he regrets to find in Gibbon. The reason for all this innate animosity against Judaism and the Jews, that our Christian friends cannot prevent themselves from exhibiting, undoubtedly is that Christians are what their religion teaches them to be; and all Christian teaching is narrow, intolerant, and essentially anti-Jewish. Christianity, nominally based upon Judaism, is, in reality, radically opposed to it.

The observation that has just been made regarding our Christian friends,—that they are what their religion teaches them to be,—is also applicable to the Jews, with reference to their religion. If their Scriptures taught the Israelites to foster feelings of hatred toward their fellow-beings who were not Israelites, then we would not feel called upon to express surprise, when Christian writers should speak of the implacable hatred entertained by the Jews for the remainder of mankind as a Jewish trait concerning the existence of which there could be no doubt; but, when their Scriptures teach the Jews to love the non-Israelites as they do their own people, then we are forced to conclude that the charge of hatred to the rest of mankind, brought against the sons of Israel by their Christian critics, is not founded upon any excess of love cherished for them by the latter. We can understand, even

while we lament, that the fidelity with which the Jews, in obedience to the commands of the Almighty, maintain the observance of the ordinances by which He distinguished them, as His witnesses, from all other nations, could draw from Gibbon and other eminent Christian writers no kinder a term than that of "sullen obstinacy"; and that the manners of the Jews should be described as "unsocial," even though they are enjoined to share with non-Jews the festivities of their religious celebrations.

If we compare the teaching of Moses with that of Jesus, we will have no difficulty in determining whether it be Judaism or Christianity that imparts to its followers a feeling of hatred to the rest of mankind. And we will first state what the Law of Moses taught.

"And a stranger thou shalt not vex, and shall not oppress him; for strangers ye were in the land of Egypt."¹—"And a stranger shalt thou not oppress; for ye know well the spirit of a stranger, seeing ye yourselves were strangers in the land of Egypt."²—If a stranger sojourn with thee, in your land, ye shall not vex him. As one born in the land among you, shall be unto you the stranger that sojourneth with you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Eternal your God."³—"One manner of judicial law shall ye have, the stranger shall be equal with one of your own country; for I am the Eternal your God."⁴—"Congregation! One statute shall be for you and for the stranger that sojourneth: a statute for ever in your generations;

¹ Exod. xxii. 20.

² *Ibid.* xxiii. 9.

³ Levit. xix. 33, 34.

⁴ *Ibid.* xxiv. 22.

as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the Eternal. One law and one code shall be for you and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.”¹—“For the native born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them; one law shall be for you, for him that acteth through ignorance.”²

XVII.

IN the last number I cited some of the passages from the Pentateuch that commanded the Israelites to treat strangers, that is, non-Jews, in the same way that they would their own people. The Israelites were ordered to love non-Israelites, and to abstain from vexing and oppressing them, first, because they were taught that all men, whether Jews or non-Jews, are equal in the sight of the Almighty; and, secondly, because the Israelites had learned, from the cruelties practised upon them during their sojourn in Egypt, what it was to be strangers in a land that was not theirs. The cruel persecutions which the Israelites had suffered in Egypt they were commanded not to imitate, not to retaliate upon others; but they were enjoined to love the stranger, and to learn from their own sufferings while in Egypt that they must be as kind and considerate to all who were not of their own nation as they would or could be to members of their own race. “Thou shalt love the stranger as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.”³ As ye are,

¹ Numb. xv. 15, 16.

² *Ibid.*, 29.

³ Levit. xix. 34.

so shall the stranger be before the Eternal.”¹ If these be lessons of a kind that tend to inculcate feelings of hatred to the rest of humanity, then, possibly, the Jews may be rightly stigmatized by Christian writers as implacable haters of their fellow-men; but, if they are teachings of a totally opposite character, then do those Christian writers who bring such charges against the Israelites show that it is not within the spirit of Christianity to understand the sentiments of love toward all men that the God of Israel has laid down as a law to be observed by His chosen people.

“For the Eternal your God is the God of gods, and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who hath no regard to persons, and taketh no bribe; who executeth justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loveth the stranger, to give him food and raiment. Love ye then the stranger; for you have been strangers in the land of Egypt.”² This is what the Law of Moses teaches the Jew.

The Israelites were not taught that conversion to Judaism was essential to the salvation of the non-Israelite; nor were they told that the non-Israelite was under the ban of the Almighty, and belonged to the kingdom of Satan, and was doomed by God to eternal torture; but they were taught that the Eternal their God loved the non-Israelite, and commanded them to love him, and to abstain from vexing and oppressing him. The narrow and intolerant doctrine that belief in one particular creed is necessary to salvation is not to be found in the Law of Moses, nor elsewhere in the Hebrew Scriptures. There is no

¹ Numb. xv. 15.

² Deut. x, 17-19.

exclusiveness of that kind in the Jewish religion. Their sages have always taught the Jews that the pious and virtuous of all faiths have an equal share in the happiness of the future life; and the charge that, because the Jews do not seek to convert Gentiles to Judaism, they are under the apprehension of diminishing the value of their inheritance, by sharing it too easily with the strangers of the earth, is one of those accusations that only prejudice, and inability to understand the grand principles of Judaism, could occasion our Christian friends to bring against the Jewish people.

One of the kindest epithets that Gibbon and other Christian writers can bring themselves to apply to the Jews is that of "that unsocial people." But the charge of being not social towards the non-Israelite has as little foundation as that of being haters of the rest of mankind; for the Jews were expressly commanded to include all non-Israelites living among them in the enjoyment of all their festivities, and to show them, at all times, the same kindness, consideration and hospitality that they were ordered to extend to the Levite, and to the fatherless and the widow of their own race. "At the end of three years shalt thou bring forth all the tithe of thy produce in the same year, and thou shalt lay it down within thy gates: And then shall come the Levite, because he hath no portion nor inheritance with thee, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates, and they shall eat and be satisfied; in order that the Eternal thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hand which thou doest."¹ Hospitality to the

¹ Deut. xiv. 28, 29.

non-Israelite was thus made a maxim of the Jewish religion; and it is one of the ordinances that must be observed by the Jew, if he would hope to secure the blessing of the Almighty.

“And thou shalt rejoice before the Eternal thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are in the midst of thee, in the place which the Eternal thy God will choose to let His name dwell there.”¹—“And thou shalt rejoice on thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates,”²—“Thou shalt not pervert the cause of the stranger, or of the fatherless; and thou shalt not take in pledge the raiment of a widow; but thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond-man in Egypt, and that the Eternal thy God redeemed thee from thence; therefore do I command thee to do this thing. When thou cuttest down thy harvest in thy field, and forgettest a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go back to fetch it; for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow shall it be; in order that the Eternal thy God may bless thee in all the works of thy hands. When thou beatest thy olive-tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again; for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow shall it be. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean the small fruit afterward; for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow

¹ Deut. xvi. 11.

² *Ibid.* xvi. 14.

shall it be. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond-man in the land of Egypt; therefore do I command thee to do this thing.”¹

We have seen that Moses taught the Israelites to love non-Israelites, and to abstain from vexing and oppressing them, because God loved them; let us now consider the teaching of Jesus. If the founder of Christianity taught his followers that it was their duty to love their fellow-men who were not of their religion, and to refrain from vexing and oppressing them, because the Almighty Father of all mankind loved the non-Christian as He did the Christian, then did Jesus, equally with Moses, preach the lesson of love for all men; but if Jesus inculcated the doctrine that the non-Christian would be rejected by him and by God, and would be devoted by them to everlasting punishment, then did he preach a lesson that was not calculated to instil in his disciples any feeling of love for the rest of the human species.

This is what Jesus taught. “Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”² Thus, according to the New Testament, peace on earth, and love by man for his fellow-men, were not what Jesus came to bring to mankind.

¹ Deut. xxiv. 17-22.

² Matt. x. 32-35.

"Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven," was the dictum of Jesus; and, in conformity with this teaching, the Christian church regards all non-Christians as being members of the kingdom of Satan, and cheerfully and self-complacently devotes them to eternal tortures.

In this doctrine of the new religion, Gibbon finds a potent cause of the growth of the Christian church. He says: "The careless Polytheist, assailed by new and unexpected terrors, against which neither his priests nor his philosophers could afford him any certain protection, was very frequently terrified and subdued by the menace of eternal tortures. His fears might assist the progress of his faith and reason; and if he could once persuade himself to suspect that the Christian religion might possibly be true, it became an easy task to convince him that it was the safest and most prudent party that he could possibly embrace."¹

A Christian writer has stated that the two leading popular wants of the age, at the beginning of the Christian era, were the worship of a supreme spiritual Godhead, and a settled conviction of the immortality of the soul; and that Christianity supplied these so authoritatively that it could not fail to make a rapid progress. It is not necessary to discuss the first point, that of a supreme spiritual Godhead; for the revelation of One Sole God, besides whom there is none else, contained in the Jewish Scriptures, is as far above the Christian and Platonic theory of a triumvirate of Gods as the latter excels the polytheism of the Greek and Roman mythologies.

¹ Gibbon's "Rome," vol. 2, p. 35 (Bohn, 1854).

With regard to the second point.—that of the immortality of the soul,—we have seen that it is claimed by Gibbon that the doctrine of the future life was not taught by Moses, and was unknown to the Israelites until after the Babylonian Captivity, and first received the sanction of truth from the teaching of Jesus and his Apostles. Christian divines usually go further than Gibbon, and claim that life and immortality were first brought to light by the Gospel; but their pretension need not be treated seriously, for the New Testament itself represents the resurrection of the dead as being perfectly well known to the Jews, and the cause of contention between the Pharisees and Sadducees; the former maintaining, and the latter denying, the doctrine of the resurrection. And it is a sufficient reply to Gibbon and all other Christian writers who claim that the doctrine of a future life was not taught by Moses, to point out that the New Testament describes Jesus himself as proving it to the Sadducees out of the books of Moses. “And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? . . . And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.”¹ And it is evident that Jesus could not have proved the doctrine of a future life from Moses, if it were not embodied in the Law of Moses. Our Christian friends cannot assert that the

¹ Mark xii, 24, 26, 27.

immortality of the soul was not taught by Moses without contradicting Jesus.

The sect of the Sadducees, who were also called the Baithosees, from the names of its founders, Sadoc and Baithos, had its beginning at a time when the Jewish people were living in friendly relations with the Greeks of Syria and Egypt, and when many of them were greatly influenced by Grecian customs and philosophy. Sadoc and Baithos were two of the scholars of Antigonus of Socho, who succeeded the high priest Simon the Just in the presidency of the Sanhedrim. In his lectures to his scholars, Antigonus exhorted them to serve the Almighty, not in a servile manner, in the expectation of a reward, but out of the love and fear which they owed Him. "Be not like unto servants who serve their master for the sake of receiving a reward," were the words of Antigonus, "but be like unto servants who serve their master without the prospect of receiving a reward (that is, out of pure love); and let the fear of Heaven be continually upon you."

Sadoc and Baithos appear to have become converts to the doctrines of Epicurus, and to have perverted the meaning of the maxim of Antigonus, so as to make it useful to their new creed. Drawing from it the false inference that there were no rewards at all after this life, they separated themselves from the school of their old master, and taught that there was no resurrection nor future state. They said: "Shall a laborer work all day, and not receive his wages in the evening? Surely, if there were any reward or future state after death, or if the dead were ever to

rise again, our teacher would not have directed us to expect no reward." And as many persons were perverted by them to this doctrine, there thus arose that sect among the Jews that, from the names of its founders, was called the Sadducees, or Baithosees.

XVIII

THE death of Alexander the Great was followed by a series of wars between his generals that desolated Western and Central Asia, and did not spare Judea. Jerusalem was besieged by Ptolemy, and taken by storm on a Sabbath day; and, of the surviving inhabitants, over one hundred thousand were carried away by him into Egypt. During the twenty-two years that the struggle between the generals of Alexander lasted, Palestine, from its intermediate situation between the two powerful kingdoms, as they speedily became, of Syria, northward, and of Egypt, southward, was alternately devastated by both. But, after the battle of Ipsus confirmed Seleucus in the possession of Syria, part of Asia Minor, and the immense extent of territory between the Euphrates and the Indus, and Ptolemy in that of Egypt, Cyrene, and Lybia, and restored to him Cœle-Syria and Palestine, there ensued a period of about eighty years, during which the Jews prospered and throve in peace, not only in Judea and Egypt, but also, where they were most numerous, throughout the extensive dominions of the Syro-Grecian empire. Under the mild and beneficent rule of the first three Ptolemies, the Judeans, in par-

ticular, flourished greatly. Self-governed, lightly taxed, and free from the terrors and disturbances of war, peace and plenty prevailed throughout their land, and their numbers and wealth equally increased.

During this period of peace, the Jews lived in close and amicable connection with the Greeks, both of Egypt and Syria; and the influence which the latter exercised over the former gradually became very great. Grecian arts, philosophy, and manners acted on the susceptible minds of the warm-hearted and imaginative Jews with an effect all the more powerful because it was friendly. No attempts were made by the Greeks to coerce the Jews into any deviation from their long-cherished customs; but the restraints of the Law of Moses were opposed by the pleasures and elegancies of Grecian life, and the authority of the Jewish religion was weakened by the insidious and pernicious influence of Grecian philosophy.

Among the various systems of Grecian philosophy the one that found most favor with the multitude was that of Epicurus. He taught that the greatest good was happiness, and that the chief ingredient of happiness, nay, the greatest good itself, was pleasure, and the enjoyment thereof. He held up pleasure and its enjoyments as the sole aim of all human exertions; and met and removed any scruples that might arise from thinking of the Deity, by the assertion that the happiness of the gods themselves consisted in the enjoyment of tranquillity, and that they did not concern themselves about human actions, good or bad. Such a doctrine was likely to find ready acceptance with many, especially among Orientals, who, from the

influence of their climate, were more particularly disposed to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures. Epicurus, moreover, apparently yielded great homage to virtue, which he designated as the chiefest pleasure, because it carried with it its own highest recompense; and, as his doctrine apparently proclaimed the supremacy of virtue, many a disciple might be caught by it, even from among those who cared naught for sensual enjoyments. But the Epicurean supremacy of virtue was a mere illusion, because the main object of the system was the gratification of man's desire for pleasure; and the lowest propensities of man had the same unquestionable right to insist on being gratified that had his highest and purest aspirations.

It was in opposition to the pernicious principles of Epicurus, and in consequence of their prevalence, that Antigonus of Socho propounded his maxims, which, as he was president of the Sanhedrim, may be regarded as an expression of the doctrine of orthodox Judaism. "Be not like servants who serve their master on condition of receiving a reward: but be like servants who serve their master without the stipulation of any reward." Antigonus here declared that man should serve God, not with the expectation of being rewarded in this life by the enjoyment of earthly pleasures and happiness, but out of love for the Almighty, and from the desire to be obedient to His will. And as the climax of the Epicurean creed was that the gods did not take any heed of the actions of men, because their doing so would disturb the perfect tranquillity which constituted their beatitude, Antigonus, in direct opposition to this doctrine of Epicurus, and as the expres-

sion of the teachings of Judaism, added the concluding portion of his maxim, "And let the fear of Heaven be continually upon you." In short, Antigonus, by his maxims, declared that God did take cognizance of human deeds, and that He would reward the pious man and punish the wicked; that the Epicurean doctrine of divine indifference to the actions of men was false; that man should not look for or desire earthly rewards, and that the pleasures of this world were not the chiefest good; but that the greatest happiness could only be found in religion, and in the hope of eternal felicity in a future life, which depended on a willing obedience to the commands of the Almighty.

Sadoc and Baithos were among those who embraced the doctrines of Epicurus; and they sought, with perverse ingenuity, to strengthen their new creed by enlisting in its service the very maxims with which their old master, Antigonus, had opposed it. And as Epicurus denied the immortality of the soul, and taught that "When death is, we are not; when we are, death is not"; so Sadoc and Baithos also held that the soul died with the body, and that there was no resurrection of the dead.

The Sadducees gradually became a political party, rather than a religious sect, among the Jews; and, as political partisans, they became a powerful, and for some time a dominant, body in Judea. As a political party, they attracted attention; had they remained only a religious sect, history would probably have taken no notice of them. And they made no attempt to reconcile the doctrines of Epicurus, which they

had adopted, with the letter of the Law of Moses, until their desperate efforts to get rid of that law had completely failed.

The great majority of the Jewish people, who received the name of Pharisees, and constituted, in fact, the Jewish nation, never accepted the Epicurean views of the Sadducees, but remained true to the teachings of the Law of Moses; and, as a part of that law, always continued to maintain the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the dead. The accounts of the Pharisees and Sadducees that are given by Gibbon and other Christian writers are erroneous, and are not supported by any of the Jewish authorities, who all agree in tracing the origin of the sect of the Sadducees to the perversion of the maxims of Antigonus by his Epicurean disciples, Sadoc and Baithos.

Gibbon's statement that the Pharisees, that is, the Jewish people, borrowed, under the name of traditions, the doctrines of fate and predestination, of angels and spirits, and of a future state of rewards and punishments, and other new articles of belief, which he does not specify, from the philosophy or religions of the Eastern nations, is most absurd. Not one article of the Jewish religion can be instanced that has been borrowed from the philosophical or religious system of any other nation, either of ancient or modern times; they are all based on the Word of God, contained in the Hebrew Scriptures.

The doctrine of fate or predestination, as it is generally understood, that is, the foreordination by God of everything that comes to pass, and, particularly,

the predestination of certain persons to everlasting life, and of all others to eternal torture and death, has never formed part of the Jewish religion. The Law of Moses inculcates the doctrine of man's free agency, that is expressed in the phrase of the Jewish sages, "Everything is in the hands or power of Heaven, except the fear of Heaven." This teaches that all things are created and ordained by the Almighty, except the actions of man. The actions of man are not predestinated, but are the immediate production of his own free will; and man should therefore pay particular regard to his words and actions, because he will be obliged to give an account of them hereafter. For his good deeds he will receive a reward, and punishment for his bad ones; for he is absolute master of them all, without any compulsion whatever. "I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you this day," said the prophet Moses, "that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose thou life, in order that thou mayest live, both thou and thy seed."¹

The Jews believe in predestination to a certain limited extent; for they hold that it is foreordained by the Almighty whether a man will be wise or foolish, weak or strong, rich or poor. Wisdom, power and riches are regarded as being the direct gifts of Providence, and therefore foreordained; but the manner in which a man will employ and make use of these gifts is not ordained. "Thus saith the Eternal, Let not the wise glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty glory in his might, let not the rich glory in his riches: But

¹ Deut. xxx. 19.

let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Eternal who exercise loving-kindness, justice, and righteousness on the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Eternal.”¹ In these verses the prophet Jeremiah teaches us that those who are possessed of wisdom, riches, and power should not glory in them, for they are not of their own acquiring, but are the gifts of the Almighty; but the manner in which these gifts are to be employed, God has been pleased not to ordain, but has left the way in which they will be used to man’s own free will. For this reason, and in order that we may choose the good and avoid all evil use of them, Jeremiah counsels us to know and understand the Eternal, that is, to study and contemplate the attributes of the Supreme Being; and as He continually exercises loving-kindness, justice, and righteousness on the earth, so should man employ the gifts that God has bestowed on him to the same just, good, and beneficent purposes.

“Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?” Here, again, we are taught that man is absolute master of his own actions, whether they be good or bad; for, otherwise, in what could have consisted the extraordinary merit of Job, that it should cause him to be so highly praised by the Almighty? If the good works of Job were the result of predestination,—if they were not the effect of his own choice, and of his own free-will,—then would he have been no more

¹ Jere. ix. 22, 23.

² Job i. 8.

entitled to praise than a puppet, or a piece of machinery; for he would not have had the power to act in any other way than he did. As the Jews, therefore, do not believe in the doctrine of fate or predestination, as our Christian friends understand it, Gibbon's statement that the Pharisees borrowed that doctrine from the philosophy or religions of the Eastern nations is simply absurd.

Remarkable, however, as is Gibbon's statement about the way in which the Jews acquired their supposed belief in fate and predestination, it is trite and commonplace when compared with the information he gives us about the manner in which they obtained their knowledge of the existence of angels and spirits. If the Jews knew nothing about angels, and did not believe in their existence, until the Pharisees borrowed the idea from the religious systems of other nations, then they could have known nothing about their Scriptures until long after their return from the Babylonian Captivity; or else, the Hebrew Scriptures must have been afterward altered so as to include the numerous mentions they now contain of the existence of angels, and of the part they played in the history of the people of Israel, from the time of their forefather Abraham. If we are to credit Gibbon, it was not until after the Pharisees had acquired some knowledge about angels from the other nations of the East that the Jews came to hear about and believe in the existence of the angels of the Lord who are so frequently spoken of throughout the whole of the Old Testament!

The amount of nonsense of which even the wisest and most learned of our Christian friends are capable

of delivering, and do disburden themselves, whenever they undertake to speak or write about the people and religion of Israel, is most incredible. It appears as if, on these subjects, it is absolutely impossible for any of those who labor in Christ's vineyard, whether they be clergy or laity, to make any statement that can be relied on, or that is not colored by the prejudices that are innate in them, and which must find expression.

XIX

ACCORDING to the New Testament,¹ it was in the revelation made by the Almighty to Moses, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,"² that Jesus found incontrovertible proof of the truth of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and of the immortality of the soul, because God was not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. The argument of Jesus was, that although the bodies of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had undergone death and corruption, yet their immortal parts, their souls, had returned to God, and were still living. Had their death been the final end of the Hebrew patriarchs, the Almighty might have said to Moses that He had been their God, but He would not have described Himself as still being their God; and Moses would not have made use of an expression that presupposed their continued existence.

"And God said, Let us make man in our image,

¹ Mark xii. 24, 26, 27.

² Exod. iii. 6

after our likeness. . . . And God created man in His image, in the image of God created He him.”¹ The creation of man in the image of God cannot refer to the body of man, which, unlike God, is subject to decay and death; it cannot mean that man was physically, and in outward shape and appearance, made to resemble his Creator, for God is a spirit, and has no material form, and we cannot compare Him to anything that exists; but it does mean, and can only mean, that the spiritual part of man, his soul, was made after the divine image. In this account, then, of the creation of man, we are taught by Moses that the soul of man was made in the image of God, and, therefore, that it was, like God, incorruptible and undying.

We are told by Moses that God said to Abraham, “And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.”² Here, again, Moses teaches the doctrine of a future life, for the words “thou shalt go to thy fathers” necessarily presuppose the fact of a continuance of existence after death, in respect both to Abraham and his ancestors.

The sentence, “Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace,” cannot mean that the Almighty only intended to promise Abraham that he would die in peace, that is, that his death would not be violent or painful, but peaceful and painless, for then the words, “Thou shalt die in peace,” would have been more appropriate; and they are the words that should have been used to convey such a meaning. Nor could the expression “Thou shalt go to thy fathers” have been intended

¹ Gen. i. 26, 27.

² *Ibid.* xv. 15.

as a promise to Abraham that he would be buried in the burial-place of his ancestors, for his father died in Charan, and his grandfather in their ancestral home, in Ur of the Chaldees; and Abraham not only took no steps to provide for his own burial in either of these places, but even guarded against such a contingency by purchasing the cave of Machpelah as a possession for a burying-place in the land which God had given him. "Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace" can, therefore, only be understood as a promise made by God to Abraham that he would, as a reward for his virtue and faith, enjoy a continuance of existence in happiness after death, with those of his forefathers whose piety had entitled them to share in the bliss of the future life. We thus learn, from these words of Moses, that the doctrine of life after death, and of the immortality of the soul, was known to the people of Israel from the time of their great progenitor Abraham, and that it was also known to the latter's ancestors. The allusions, indeed, made by Moses to the fact of there being an existence beyond the grave are made in such a matter-of-course way that we are forced to conclude from them that it was so fully recognized and established a truth, in his time and to his people, as to require from him neither teaching nor comment. The doctrine of a future life is as integral a part, and as established a principle, of the Law of Moses, as are those of the Unity of God, or the free agency of man, or the doctrine of non-vicarious punishment.

After the children of Israel had sinned in the matter of the golden calf, "Moses returned unto the Eternal,

and said, Oh, this people hath sinned a great sin, and they have made themselves gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; but if not, blot me out, I pray Thee, from Thy book which Thou hast written. And the Eternal said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out from My book.”¹ On this occasion Moses prayed to the Almighty to forgive the heinous sin of which the Israelites had been guilty, in making and worshipping the molten calf; and, if their sin were characterized by too great a degree of wickedness to permit God to pardon it, then Moses offered himself for punishment in their place, and prayed that he himself should be blotted out of the book which the Eternal had written. But God refused to accept the sacrifice which Moses offered to make of himself in atonement for the sin of others; the Almighty would not permit a vicarious atonement, nor would He inflict a vicarious punishment, for such an action was incompatible with the justice of Heaven. “Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out from My book.” We are here taught that the Eternal will blot out from His book those who have sinned against Him; and, conversely, that He will not blot out those who have not sinned against Him. The book referred to cannot, therefore, be a book in which God inscribes for life in this world only those who have not sinned against Him; for, if it were, then must all men, the non-sinners as well as the sinners, be sooner or later blotted out from it, since no man can hope to escape death in this world. The book written by God, to which Moses

¹ Exod. xxxii. 31-33.

referred, must, consequently, have been the book of life eternal, the book in which God inscribed for everlasting life, not the bodies, but the souls of all who had not sinned against Him, or who, having sinned, had repented and turned from their sins. So, here, again, we have another declaration of the immortality of the soul and of a life beyond the grave, made by Moses.

“I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose thou life, in order that thou mayest live, both thou and thy seed.”¹ In this exhortation made by Moses, we have another reference to the immortality of the soul and the doctrine of a future life; for, in urging the people of Israel to love the Eternal their God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His ordinances, in order that they might live; and in counselling them not to suffer themselves to be drawn away from their God, not to bow down to other gods, nor serve them, in which case they would surely perish; in setting before them life and the good, death and the evil, and exhorting them to choose life,—Moses was teaching them that they had the power to choose life and to avoid death, not for their bodies, but for their souls. Life for their bodies it was not in their power to make a choice of, for death is the inevitable lot of all; but life for their souls, life eternal, they could choose, and could secure, by loving the Eternal their God, and hearkening to His voice, and cleaving unto Him.

¹ Deut. xxx. 19.

These are but a few of the many instances in which allusion is made by Moses, in the most matter-of-course way, to the doctrine of a future life and the immortality of the soul, as being a truth well known to the people of Israel; and, did time and space permit, we might notice scores of other instances in which the same truth is referred to, in the same unmistakable way, throughout the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures. To all those, then, of our Christian friends who pretend that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is not to be found in the Law of Moses, and is not taught by the Hebrew Scriptures, we may apply the remark made by Jesus to the Sadducees, when he proved to them, from the book of Moses, the resurrection of the dead,—“Ye do greatly err, because ye know not the Scriptures.”¹ And the same observation may be made about them concerning all the questions of faith and doctrine that are at issue between them and the Jews.

In order to arrive at a decision upon those questions, it is not necessary for the Jews to search for reasons to account for the spread of Christianity, any more than for that of Islamism; for the propagation of neither of these religions is a proof that either of them is from God. Both of them inculcate an excellent morality, for both of them have drawn their best moral precepts from the Old Testament; both of them have contributed—Mahometanism perhaps more than Christianity—to the abolishment of idolatry; and both of them mark advances in the progress of mankind toward Judaism, which is the religion, and the only

¹ Mark xii. 24, 27.

religion, that does emanate from the Almighty, and therefore teaches, in a way that no system invented by man can do, the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man. It is Judaism, and not Christianity nor Mahometanism, of which it is asserted in the Old Testament, that it will one day become the sole religion of all mankind; and it is through Judaism and the Jews that the Gentile world has acquired, and is still being taught, its knowledge of God, and of the grand laws which He has framed for the government and moral and spiritual welfare and happiness of all His children.

The Christian theory of a triumvirate of gods, and of a Fourth Being, or Evil Spirit, possessed of power almost equal to that of their three gods, is not the religion of the Hebrew Scriptures, which teach us that there is but One God, the Eternal, besides whom there is no one else. The Christian theory cannot be reconciled with the declaration made by the Eternal, through His prophet Moses, "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me; I alone kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; and no one can deliver out of My hand"¹; it cannot be reconciled with the teaching of Moses, "Know therefore this day, and reflect in thy heart, that the Eternal is the God in the heavens above, and on the earth beneath; there is none else"²; it cannot be reconciled with the address of King David, "Therefore art Thou great, O Eternal God, for there is none like Thee, and there is no god beside Thee, in accordance with all that we have heard with our ears"³; nor with the prayer

¹ Deut. xxxii. 39.² *Ibid.*, iv. 39.³ 2 Sam. vii. 22.

of King Solomon, "O Eternal, the God of Israel, there is no god like Thee, in the heavens above, and on the earth beneath, Thou who keepest the covenant and the kindness for Thy servants that walk before Thee with all their heart"¹; and it cannot be reconciled with the declaration made by Isaiah, "Thus hath said the Eternal, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Eternal of Hosts, I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no god."² In short, the Christian theory cannot be made to agree with the Hebrew Scriptures, which are consistent throughout, and speak of only One God, the Eternal, and declare, times almost without number, that He is the Only God, and the Only Creator, Ruler and Preserver of the world, and the Only Redeemer and Saviour of mankind, and that beside Him there is none else.

We are told in the New Testament that when the Apostle Paul was in Jerusalem, and while he prayed in the Temple, he was in a trance, and saw Jesus saying to him, "Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; for they (the Jews) will not receive thy testimony concerning me"; and that Jesus further said to him, "Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."³ There is an important and valuable practical lesson to be drawn from this advice and these instructions said to have been given by Jesus to the great champion of his church, that its lesser lights would do well to study, profit by, and apply; and to their earnest attention we respectfully commend it.

¹ 1 Kings viii. 23.

² Isaiah xlv. 6.

³ Acts xxii. 17, 18, 21.

AN ANSWER TO CHRISTIAN EVANGELISTS

I

THE majority of Jews in Protestant countries are familiar with the kind of tracts and periodicals that are published by the societies for the conversion of Israelites to Christianity; for there are never lacking those among our Christian friends who do not consider it to be inconsistent with good breeding and manners to force these publications upon the notice of their Jewish acquaintances, although knowing them to be not wanted or desired, and certainly not asked for, by the latter. These publications are all of the same general character; they all ignore the numerous unequivocal declarations contained in the Hebrew Scriptures, that the Eternal is the Only God, besides whom there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and none else; they all avoid any attempt to show how those declarations can be reconciled—if it be possible to reconcile them—with the Platonic theory of a trinity of Gods that Christianity has adopted; and they all present us with arguments and deductions that are incompatible with these declarations of the Eternal, and are therefore unfounded and valueless. These Christian tracts and publications contain nothing

else than a tissue of misapplications and perversions of the text of the Hebrew Scriptures; and they all exhibit so much disregard or ignorance of the fundamental doctrine of those Scriptures, and such want of knowledge of the principles and teachings of Judaism, that the attempts of their authors to tell the Jews what their religion was prior to and at the time of Jesus, what it is at the present time, and what it ought to be, are very amusing.

As one who has been favored with a fair supply of these undesired effusions of mistaken Christian zeal, it cannot be deemed out of place for the writer to state that he has not found, in any one of the many publications that have been sent him, one single argument in favor of the Christian theories of the divinity and Messiahship of Jesus that, were the subject one of less supreme importance, could be held worthy of notice and reply.

In these publications we find it claimed by their Christian authors that the Hebrew Scriptures reveal the existence of a plurality in the Godhead,—that is, that they establish the existence of the Son and the Holy Spirit as gods separate and distinguishable from the Eternal; but these Christian writers make no attempt to explain why, if such were the case, the Hebrew Scriptures should so emphatically assert the contrary, and continually affirm and reaffirm, from first to last, that the Eternal is the Only God, beside whom there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and none else. These Christian Evangelists claim that it is the will of the Almighty that the Jews should worship Jesus as their Lord and Saviour; but they

make no attempt to explain why, if such were the design of the Eternal, He should have declared the contrary, and have commanded, "I am the Eternal thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before Me."¹ —"I am the Eternal thy God from the land of Egypt; and thou shalt know no god but Me, and there is no saviour besides Me."² These Christian Evangelists pretend that Moses taught the doctrine of a trinity of gods; but they fail to explain why, if such were the case, the Great Lawgiver should have proclaimed the contrary, and have not only said, "Hear, O Israel, the Eternal our God, the Eternal is One,"³ but have also declared that there is no god with the Eternal and none else beside Him.⁴ These Christian Evangelists quote verses from the Psalms, and claim that they are the prophetic utterances of King David, establishing the Sonship and divinity of Jesus, but they make no attempt to explain why, if such were the true import of those verses, the Royal Psalmist should also have maintained the contrary and have declared, "Therefore art Thou great, O Eternal God; for there is none like Thee, and there is no god beside Thee, in accordance with all that we have heard with our ears."⁵ Christian Evangelists cite a verse in Proverbs, in support of their claim of the Sonship and divinity of Jesus; but they fail to explain why, if such were its true interpretation, King Solomon should also have declared the contrary, and have prayed, "O Eternal, the God of Israel, there is no god like Thee, in the heavens above, and on the earth beneath."⁶ Christian

¹ Exod. xx. 2, 3.² Hosea xiii. 4.³ Deut. vi. 4.⁴ Deut. iv. 35, 39.⁵ 2 Sam. vii. 22.⁶ 1 Kings viii. 23.

Evangelists quote verses from Isaiah, as prophesying the miraculous conception of Jesus, and establishing his divinity; but they cannot explain why, if such were the true meaning of the words of Isaiah, that prophet also should have asserted the contrary, and have declared, "Thus hath said the Eternal, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Eternal of Hosts, I am the first, and I am the last, and beside Me there is no god."¹—"I am the Eternal, and there is none else beside Me there is no god."²—"I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me."³ "I, even I, am the Eternal, and beside Me there is no saviour."⁴

II

FOR reasons they have never explained, Christian Evangelists have never ventured to take any notice of the explicit denials of the truth of their doctrines by all the writers of the books of the Old Testament, upon whose picked-out words, isolated and wrenched from the meaning of the context, they endeavor to construct the fabric of their religion. If the only object that Christian Evangelists have in view is to prove that their side of the question is the correct one, and for that purpose to try to make it appear that their theory of a trinity of gods has the sanction and support of the Hebrew Scriptures, then their policy of ignoring every statement that contradicts their theory is pos-

¹ Isaiah xlv. 6.

³ *Ibid.* xlv. 9.

² *Ibid.* xlv. 5.

⁴ *Ibid.* xliii. 11.

sibly the only one they can adopt; but if, as we would like to believe, our Christian brethren are sometimes animated by the higher, nobler, and more honest motive of ascertaining the truth, whatever it may be, and of making it known, then their system of disregarding every declaration that is opposed to the trinitarian doctrine of their creed cannot be understood. Whatever the explanation of this Christian peculiarity may be, the fact remains that, from the time of the Apostles down to the present day, Christian Evangelists have never dared to draw attention to the many declarations made by the Eternal, that beside Himself there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and no one else, and to tell us, if they can, how their belief in the existence of the second and third persons of their Trinity can be reconciled with those declarations. From the New Testament down to their latest tract and publication, Christian Evangelists have always shown themselves unable to face and discuss the real question that is at issue between them and the Jews,—between them and the Hebrew Scriptures,—between them and the Eternal. Bring any Christian Evangelists to the point, and ask them to explain how their belief in their so-called trinity of gods can be reconciled with the many reiterated assertions contained in the Hebrew Scriptures, that the Eternal is the Only God and Saviour, to the total and absolute exclusion of all other gods and every other saviour, and they are unable to give a reply; they have to shelter themselves behind the vain plea that their doctrine of a trinity of gods is a matter revealed to their faith, but not to their reason for explanation or speculation. Revealed to their

faith, indeed! and by whom? Not by the Eternal; for He has declared that beside Himself there is no god and no saviour, none like Him and none else. Not by the prophets of the Old Testament; for they also declare that the Eternal is the Only God, besides whom there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and no one else. The doctrine of a trinity or triumvirate of gods was revealed to Christian faith and credulity by those founders of Christian dogma who identified Jesus of Nazareth with the *Logos* of the Platonic system, and who, adopting the Platonic theory of the creation of the world by the *Logos*, found themselves obliged to give Jesus, as the pretended creator of the universe, a character and importance commensurate to his supposed work.

As a consequence of the human origin of the distinguishing doctrines of their religion, Christians, from the time of the Apostles, have been unable to agree among themselves as to what are the essential truths of Christianity. To-day, after nearly nineteen hundred years of groping in the dark, the Greek, Roman Catholic, and Protestant churches are bitterly opposed to one another in matters of doctrine; the members of either one of these churches deny the possession of religious truth and the possibility of salvation to the followers of the others; and yet there is not a petty sect among them whose ministers do not, in their self-conceit, consider themselves possessed of the only exclusive road to salvation, and to have been given a heaven-born mission for the conversion of Israel to the worship of another than the God of Israel.

Put plainly, the question is this: the Hebrew Script-

ures declare that the Eternal is the Only God and Saviour, besides whom there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him and none else; and Christianity maintains the contrary, and claims that there are other gods and another saviour than the Eternal alone,—that there are also Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost. The question at issue is clear and distinct, however Christian Evangelists may seek to evade and disguise it; and it is a question about which there can be no compromise. If the Hebrew Scriptures are right, then Christianity must be wrong; if Christianity be right, then the Hebrew Scriptures are wrong. And since Christianity admits that the Hebrew Scriptures are inspired of God, and contain the revealed Word of God, it follows that our Christian friends put themselves in a position which is neither logical nor honest. If they were to maintain, as a part and the basis of their trinitarian doctrine, that the Hebrew Scriptures are wrong, and not inspired of God, when they declare that the Eternal is the Only God and Saviour, besides whom there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and none else, one could understand their position, and grant that they might be honest, though mistaken in their belief; but when Christians profess to believe in the inspiration of the Hebrew Scriptures, and then labor to pervert them, in order to make it appear that those Scriptures reveal the existence and justify the worship of other gods and another saviour than the Eternal alone, then the credit for honesty and common sense in religious matters that our Christian friends might otherwise have had cannot be accorded them.

Jesus Christ is not the Eternal; the Holy Ghost is not the Eternal. Do our Christian brethren imagine that the Hebrew language is so limited in its vocabulary, or that the prophets of the Old Testament had so poor a command of that language, that they were not able to have stated and explained,—in far plainer words and in stronger terms than any Christian churchmen can give expression to,—the doctrine of the Trinityship of God, or of a triumvirate of gods, if there were, in their belief, such other gods and another saviour than the Eternal alone, as the Son and the Holy Spirit of the Christian creed? Or is the Christian mind so impenetrably dense, and the Christian heart so stubbornly perverse, in matters of religion, that from neither the one nor the other can other response be had to the repeated declarations made by the Eternal, that beside Himself there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and none else, than the idolatrous worship of other gods and another saviour?

III

JESUS CHRIST is not the Eternal; the Holy Ghost is not the Eternal; and the question still remains: what are we to do with all the statements with which the Hebrew Scriptures abound, in which it is declared, in language that admits of no second meaning, that the Eternal is the One Only God and Saviour, besides whom there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and none else? Are we to ignore them, after the manner of our Christian friends, because, forsooth,

they cannot be reconciled with the Platonic and idolatrous theory of a trinity or triumvirate of gods that Christianity has adopted, nor with the association in any way of any other god with the Eternal? The Word of God is not to be ignored. Christian opinion may perhaps hold it to have been very wrong and inexcusable, and very inconsiderate, on the part of the Eternal and His prophets to have so emphatically and persistently denied the existence of any other god besides Himself; and Christian Evangelists may, with characteristic modesty, perhaps think that if they had been in evidence at the time those declarations were made,—if the Christian church had then had its birth,—the Eternal God of Israel might, with advantage to Himself, have consulted them on the subject of His Nature and Being; and that the information they could have given Him on the matter would have led to a formal and humble recognition by the Eternal of the existence, as gods equally with Himself, of the Son and the Holy Spirit of their creed, and perhaps even of His own inferiority to the god whose name Christians have exalted above every other name. But since it happened that the Eternal did not deem it necessary to wait for a conference upon the subject with any of the luminaries great or small of the Christian church; and since the question presents itself as one of veracity between the God of Israel and the followers of the Nazarene, the Jews accept as true and perfect the declarations made to them by the God of their fathers, and reject as false and idolatrous the contrary doctrines of Christianity.

The Christian belief is that the second and third

persons of their Trinity are gods equal to and distinguishable from the Eternal; and if the latter did not have the advantage of consulting Christian churchmen upon the nature of the revelations He should make about Himself, there seems to be no reason, from the Christian point of view, why the Son and the Holy Spirit should not have been available as advisers to the Eternal, nor why they should have permitted Him to so completely forget the fact of their existence as to deny it. If Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost be gods such as Christians claim them to be, then, it may be fairly asked, where were they, and what were they doing, during all the centuries during which the Almighty and His prophets were making the declarations recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures, that beside Himself there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and no one else? Were they engaged in planning the creation of other worlds, or busy in pursuit of their Evil One, or lost in the depths of the Milky Way, or simply slumbering until the exigencies of Christianity should rouse them to active life? If the second and third persons of the Christian Trinity be gods such as Christians claim them to be, then why should the Eternal and His prophets declare that beside Himself there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and none else? Why should Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, if they be gods, have permitted their divinity to be denied by the Almighty, and have remained dumb and quiescent at all those times when a word of protest and of self-assertion from them would have proved so invaluable to their worshippers in these after ages? These are points

that are pertinent to the issue; and we invite our Christian friends to answer these interesting queries.

The question at issue between the Jew and the Christian is really one between the latter and the Almighty. The Eternal declares that beside Himself there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and none else; and the Christian answers that there is,—that there are also Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost. The Eternal commands the Israelites: “I am the Eternal thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before Me.”¹—“I am the Eternal thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but Me, and there is no saviour beside Me”²; and again the Christians would have the Jews believe that the Almighty is wrong; that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Saviour, and that unless the Jews know and acknowledge Jesus, their souls will surely go to Hell. Truly, humility and modesty are not among the failings of our Christian brethren; nor are they lacking in self-conceit and self-righteousness. But the Israelites are the witnesses of the Eternal and His servant, whom He has chosen, in order that they may know and believe Him;³ and they do believe Him, without reserve. They do not, like our Christian friends, give Him the lie.

IV

THEY whom Christians call their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, are either gods, or they are not gods. If we suppose them to be gods,

¹ Exod. xx. 2, 3.

² Hosea xiii. 4.

³ Isaiah xliii. 10.

then they must be either identical or not identical with the Eternal. If we suppose them to be identical with the Eternal, then the Christian world was in error in adopting the Platonic theory of a trinity, for there can be, in such a case, no triumvirate of gods, but only the One God, the Eternal; and whether He be called by that name, or the Almighty, or Jesus Christ, or the Holy Ghost, these would be but different designations of the One Eternal Being, besides whom there is no god. If Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost be regarded as identical with the Eternal, then the Christian church was in error when it denounced as heretical the doctrine held by the Sabellians, who maintained that there is but one person in the Godhead, and that the Son and the Holy Spirit are only different powers, operations, or offices of the One God, the Father. If the second and third persons in the Christian Trinity be held to be identical with the Eternal, then it is quite unnecessary for our Christian friends to waste so much time, energy and money in endeavoring to persuade the children of Israel to worship Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, for, in the case supposed, they already do so, and have done so from the time of their great forefathers, not, it is true, under the name so particularly cherished by Christians, but under the names by which the Eternal made Himself known to His chosen people.

And if, on the other hand, the second and third persons of the Christian Trinity be not identical with the Eternal,—and Christianity claims that they are not; if they be in any way distinguishable from the Eternal,—and Christianity maintains that they are; then

they cannot be gods, for the Eternal has declared that beside Himself there is no god, none like Him, and no one else.

"See, now, that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me."¹—"Thus hath said the Eternal, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Eternal of Hosts, I am the first and I am the last, and beside Me there is no god."²—"I am the Eternal, and there is none else; beside Me there is no god."³—"I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me."⁴

On the question of the identity of their two imaginary gods with the Eternal, our Christian brethren try to sit astride of the fence. They claim on the one side that Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost are gods who are not identical with the Eternal; that each person in their Trinity has his own hypostasis, or separate and distinct being; and, on the other side, they disclaim belief in the existence of three gods, and profess that they hold fast to the Unity of God. They say they hold fast to the Unity of God, and yet they rejected Sabellianism as heretical, because it maintained there is but One God; and to this very day they denounce the blindness and unbelief of the Jews, whom they relegate to their kingdom of Satan, because the Jews are true, and not hypocritical, believers in the Unity of God, and will not worship as God any other than the Eternal. Christians claim that each one of their three gods has his own hypostasis, and yet they found themselves obliged to reject Tritheism

¹ Deut. xxxii. 39.

² Isaiah xlv. 6.

³ Isaiah xlv. 5.

⁴ *Ibid.* xlv. 9.

as heretical because it held that there are three gods, and a belief in three gods cannot be distinguished from idolatry. Christianity is a religion of mixed Jewish and pagan origin; and, because of its hybrid nature, it finds itself in this dilemma:—it cannot, while professing to believe in only One God, admit that the Eternal is, as He declares Himself to be, the Only God, besides whom there is no god and no saviour, none like Him, and none else, for that would be an act of self-destruction; and, while worshipping three gods, it cannot openly and boldly declare that there are three of them, for that would be nothing else than idolatry. But, if the belief in the existence of more than One God be idolatry, then the worship of Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, as being gods in any way separate and distinct from the Eternal, can also be nothing else than idolatry, let our Christian brethren deny the conclusion as much as they will.

If we suppose that the second and third persons of the Christian Trinity are gods, then they must be either identical, or not identical, with the Eternal; they cannot be both. It is not the fault of the Hebrew Scriptures, which proclaim throughout that the Eternal is the Only God, to the exclusion of all other gods, that there is none beside Him, and none like Him, if Christianity, under stress of the false and impossible position in which it has placed itself, finds itself compelled to hold that in some way that it cannot explain,—in some way passing the understanding of man,—its two supposititious gods are both identical, and not identical with the Eternal; that its three gods are but One God, and that this One God is three gods.

The human mind can understand a religion that teaches us that there is but the One Supreme Being, besides whom there is no god; and it can also comprehend a system that maintains that there are three gods; but human intelligence has never been able to explain how three gods, each with his own hypostasis, can be One Only God, and how that One God can at the same time be three gods, each having his own individuality. Christian churchmen have never been able to explain the glaring absurdities and inconsistencies on which their religion is based; nor how their belief in the existence of Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, as gods separate and distinguishable from the Eternal, can be reconciled with the repeated declarations made by the latter that, beside Himself, there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and none else. These declarations are incompatible with the existence of other gods and another saviour than the Eternal alone; they are a denial by Him of the pretended association of other gods and another saviour with Him. Christianity sets itself in direct opposition to the revealed Word of God; and if the Christian world finds itself bound to a belief that it can neither justify nor explain, and in a dilemma from which it cannot escape, it is because the religious system it has adopted is nothing else than the invention of man,—a mass of contradictory doctrines and assumptions,—a mixture of Jewish monotheism with Persian, Grecian, and Roman polytheism and philosophy,—and not a revelation from the Eternal.

V

WHATEVER it may have been the intention of the Almighty to have mankind know about Himself, He did not call upon us to believe that which was beyond our human understanding; for what He did reveal was made known to us in words that neither man nor child can fail to comprehend. What was revealed was not shrouded in mystery, but was made very clear,—as clear as language could make it. “I am the Eternal thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before Me.”¹—“See, now, that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me.”²—“I, even I, am the Eternal; and beside Me there is no saviour.”³—“I am the Eternal, and there is none else; there is no god beside Me.”⁴—“I am the Eternal thy God, and thou shalt know no god but Me; and there is no saviour beside Me.”⁵ Because our Christian brethren are unable to understand, or will ignore, plain words like these, is no reason why the Jews should be afflicted with like dulness of perception or follow their example to idolatry.

“For this commandment, which I command thee this day, is not hidden from thee, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

¹ Exod. xx. 2, 3. ² Deut. xxxii. 39. ³ Isaiah xliii. 11.

⁴ Isaiah xlv. 5. ⁵ Hosea xiii. 4.

But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.”¹

In this passage the prophet Moses taught the Israelites that there was nothing that they could not understand in what their God had commanded them; that the justice of the Eternal did not require them to believe what their human reason could not comprehend; that there was neither secret nor mystery in what was told them. He taught them that they did not have to send to Heaven, that is, that they were not in need of another revelation from the Almighty, in order to find out what had been commanded them. Nor did they require to send beyond the sea, that is, that they were not to seek instruction from strangers, from non-Israelites, in order to learn the meaning of what God had told them. The Jews have not to go to Christian Evangelists, in order to find out what God’s commandments are; for the knowledge is not there. It is with themselves, the witnesses of the Eternal; it is with them, the Jews, in their mouths, and in their hearts; and the whole course of Jewish history has proved that the non-Jew can only lead the Jews astray, and will only lead them away from their God. Not to Christians, nor even to Christian Evangelists, but unto the Israelites themselves, has it been shown, that they may know, that the Eternal is the God; there is none else beside Him. Out of the heavens He caused His people to hear His voice, that He might instruct them; and upon the earth He caused them to see His great fire; and His words they did hear out of the midst of the fire.² “I am the Eternal thy God,

¹ Deut. xxx. 11-14.

² Deut. iv. 35, 36.

who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.”¹

“Know therefore this day, and reflect in thy heart, that the Eternal is the God in the heavens above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else.”² How many times, and in what form of words, must this truth be declared before it can penetrate the dull inner consciousness of our Christian brethren, before they can understand that when the Eternal and His prophets declare that besides Himself there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and no one else, those statements make no exception in favor of any one, and exclude their pretended Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and their Holy Ghost from all claim to godship as absolutely as they did the gods of the Canaanites and those of ancient Egypt? Jesus Christ is not the Eternal; the Holy Ghost is not the Eternal; and since there is no other god than the Eternal, no other saviour, none like Him, and none else, there can therefore be no such gods as the second and third persons of the Christian Trinity; there cannot even be such a person as the Devil of the New Testament. And belief in the existence of His Satanic Majesty, as an Evil Being possessed of power almost equal to that of the gods of its Trinity, is so essential a part of the Christian religion that, if Christianity were deprived of the comfort and support of this one doctrine alone, it would be at a sad loss to know what to do with itself. Take from it, also, the necessity of finding in the Jewish Scriptures, as being the accepted Word of God, reasons or excuses

¹ Exod. xx. 2, 3.

² Deut. iv. 39.

of some kind or other for its idolatrous worship of its two false and imaginary gods, and Christians might perhaps then be able to act honestly and intelligently in matters of religion.

For honesty and intelligence in matters of religion are qualities in which Christians have always shown themselves to be deficient. If it were otherwise,—if Christians were capable of acting honestly and intelligently in religious matters,—they would pick out for discussion all those passages in the Hebrew Scriptures in which it is declared that the Eternal is the Only God, besides whom there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and no one else; they would not ignore them; for these are statements that strike at the very root of their religion. These are declarations that cannot be reconciled with their theory of a trinity or triumvirate of gods; and yet, if Christians were capable of acting with intelligence in matters of religion, they would understand that they must face and deal with these declarations; that they must either accept and abide by them, or deny them; that they cannot ignore them, nor can they evade them; and that they must prove them to be false, before they can begin to establish the truth of their contrary doctrine of the existence of other gods and of another saviour than the Eternal alone.

VI

IF our Christian friends were capable of acting honestly in religious matters, they would not pretend that they believed in One God, and One only, and,

with that profession on their lips, straightway exert themselves to twist, pervert and misapply every passage in the Hebrew Scriptures that they think can be of the slightest use to them, in their vain efforts to make those Scriptures appear to reveal the existence of a plurality of gods. They would not profess that they believed in only One God, and with that profession on their lips, worship, and try to persuade Jews to worship, as gods, not only the Eternal, but also Jesus Christ, whom they claim to be not the Eternal, and the Holy Ghost, whom they also maintain to be not the Eternal.

If Christians were capable of acting with honesty in matters of religion, they would either admit the truth of the declarations that the Eternal is the Only God, beside whom there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and no one else, and, as a consequence of that admission, worship the Eternal alone as the Only God and the Only Saviour; or else, they would deny the truth of those statements, and claim that the Hebrew Scriptures are wrong, and not inspired of God. Instead of professing that they believed in the inspiration of the Hebrew Scriptures, and then laboring to pervert them, they would admit that the Hebrew Scriptures maintain, throughout, that there is but the One God, the Eternal, besides whom there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him and none else; but they would claim that such teaching was wrong. They would say: "We believe that there are two other gods besides the Eternal; and we therefore worship three gods, the Eternal, and Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost; whether such worship be idolatry or not. We hold

the Jews to be wrong in their religious belief, not because they do not follow the teaching of their Scriptures, but because we believe that teaching to be wrong; and we endeavor to convert them to our religion, because we believe that their Scriptures do not contain the truth." That would be an honest position for Christians to take, however erroneous it would be; and it is the kind of position they would take, if they were capable of acting honestly in matters of religion. Such a position would, at any rate, have the merit of being free from hypocrisy, and of showing that our Christian friends had, in the face of God and man, the courage of their real convictions.

The declaration so often made and repeated throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, that the Eternal is the Only God, beside whom there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and no one else, is the dominating maxim or truth that governs the whole of those Scriptures; and, if Christians were capable of acting with intelligence in religious matters, they would understand that any interpretation of any passage in those Scriptures that would tend to show the existence of any other god, or of any other saviour, than the Eternal alone, must necessarily be a false and erroneous interpretation; and they would therefore abstain from all attempt to interpret in that false way any part of those Scriptures. And if they wanted to find reasons or excuses for their idolatrous worship of other gods and another saviour than the Eternal alone, they would look for them somewhere else than in the Hebrew Scriptures.

In short, if our Christian friends were capable of acting with honesty and intelligence in religious matters, they

would abandon their system of perverting and misapplying the Hebrew Scriptures, for they would understand that that system can be regarded only as proof either of their ignorance of those Scriptures, or of wilful and studied dishonesty on their part. They would not ask a Jew any of the thousand and one petty and irrelevant side questions that are contained in their tracts and evangelizing pamphlets; for they would know that to every one of their questions the Jew is bound to reply that the Eternal and His prophets have declared that beside Himself there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and none else. And they would not continue to afflict their Jewish acquaintances with endless repetitions of false statements and nonsensical arguments that only the importance of the subject rescues from the silent contempt they merit.

Jesus Christ is not the Eternal; the Holy Ghost is not the Eternal; and we invite our Christian brethren to come to the point, and face the real question that is at issue, and to tell us, if they can, how their idolatrous worship of other gods and another saviour than the Eternal alone can be reconciled with the many declarations made by the latter, that beside Himself there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and no one else? If our Christian friends possess sources of information on the subject superior in authority to the Hebrew Scriptures, that justify their religion, they can make them known; if they think that they know better than the Eternal does whether there are other gods and another saviour besides Himself alone, they can say so; and, in any case, we challenge them to state, openly and plainly, whether they accept as true, or whether they deny

the truth of, the declarations made by the Eternal, that beside Himself there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and none else. And if our Christian friends admit the truth of these declarations, then we have to ask them what they will do. Will they abide by these declarations, and worship the Eternal alone as the only God and the only Saviour? or will they still persist in their idolatrous worship of false gods and an imaginary saviour whom the Eternal does not know, and whose existence He has denied? And as the consequences of adopting the latter course are very serious, we must further ask our Christian brethren if they deliberately wish to incur them?

The question at issue is very simple, for God has laid no traps or snares for men; it is as simple as it is momentous. And when men will appear before the Almighty for judgment, and He will ask our Christian friends: "Have you not known that I, the Eternal, have declared that beside Me there is no god, and no saviour, none like Me, and none else?" and they answer in the affirmative; what reply will they make to the further questions, "How, then, have you dared to worship, as god and saviour, any other than Me? How, then, have you dared to lead astray any of My people, the witnesses whom I, the Eternal, have chosen, to the worship, as god and saviour, of any other than Me?" These are questions that our Christian brethren will one day be called upon to answer, and from which they will not be able to escape; let them meditate, now, upon the replies they will make; and let them reflect that they will then be in the dread presence of One before whom all cant and hypocrisy, and all equivocation, and evasion and perversion of His word will be only so many aggravations of their sin of idolatry.

Lecture Delivered to the Young People's Society of "Shaar Hashomayim," of Montreal

November 28, 1905 (5666).

YOUR president asked me to deliver to your society a lecture similar in character to some articles that I have on various occasions contributed to *The Jewish Times* of this city, and which have been published in the columns of that paper. Those articles dealt with religious questions, with questions that have been at issue between us Jews and our Christian brethren for nearly nineteen centuries; and in asking me to address you on matters that have been the subject of controversy for so long a period of time, I think that your president has been desirous of using me for the purpose of pointing out to you a moral. The lesson that he must wish to teach you is that no Jew, not even if he be a layman like myself, and equipped with only the scantiest religious knowledge, need fear to face any of the endless questions and arguments with which Christian Evangelists are so fond of perpetually afflicting us. It is from this point of view that I regard the invitation that your president gave me; and it is because I believe that he wishes to teach you, through me, the lesson I have mentioned, that I now stand before you.

The reason why it is so easy for a Jew to answer the

questions and refute the arguments that may be addressed to him by any Christian Evangelist is not because the former has more ability or greater skill in debate than the latter, but simply because he has the better case. We have not only a good case, but the very best there can possibly be; for our religion has come to us as a direct revelation from the Almighty, delivered to us from amidst the thunders and lightnings of Mount Sinai; while the Christian has a man-made religion, the origin of whose distinguishing and fundamental feature is to be found in the vague speculations of pagan philosophy. It is then no wonder that the Jews, armed with and believing in God-given truths, should find it not difficult to disprove the erroneous statements and doctrines of Christianity.

It is claimed by our Christian brethren that their religion is a development in a higher and more spiritual form of the teachings and principles of what they term Ancient Judaism, or Mosaism, on which they say it is founded; but this is a wrong claim; and we shall presently see that the trinitarian or fundamental doctrine of Christianity has a basis other than Judaism and the Hebrew Scriptures.

For hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth the philosophers of Greece and Rome had been dissatisfied with the religious systems of their own mythologies, and had been engaged in devising some more rational form of belief. Among them may be mentioned Plato, a celebrated philosopher of Athens, who was born more than 400 years before the beginning of the Christian era. Plato's study of what he supposed to be the nature of God led him to give the

Deity a threefold character, that of the First Cause, the Word or *Logos*, and the Soul or Spirit of the Universe. These three characters were represented by Plato under the form of three gods, who were united with each other in a mysterious way; and the second of them, the Word or *Logos*, he described as the Son of an Eternal Father, and the Creator and Governor of the world. In these theories of Plato we have the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit of the Christian creed; and it is to Plato, and not to Moses,—to the schools of pagan philosophy, and not to the teachings of the Hebrew Scriptures,—that Christianity is indebted for its doctrine of a Trinity.

At the time when Christianity made its appearance the theological systems of Plato and other Grecian philosophers were taught in every seat of learning throughout the Roman Empire, and were familiar to all educated persons. Every philosophical school had its own *Logos*, who agreed with the others in some points, and differed in others; and the same subtle and difficult questions concerning the nature, the generation, the distinction and the equality of the three divine persons who composed the mysterious Triad or Trinity of the philosophical systems, that had, as abstract metaphysical questions, perplexed the wisest of the Grecian sages, and had been discussed for ages in their schools, came afterward, as real and vital questions of the highest importance, to engage the attention and to disturb the peace of the Christian church. For Christianity had, very early in its career, adopted the fundamental principle of the theology of Plato; and the Gospel that is ascribed to St. John had

confirmed the name and the divine attributes of the *Logos*. This last of the Gospels announced to the Gentile world that the *Logos* or Word, who was with God from the beginning, and was God, and by whom all things had been made, was identical with Jesus of Nazareth, and had been incarnate in his person.¹

The first or Jewish Christians had accepted Jesus as a person endowed with supernatural virtue and power, and had attributed to him all the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures relating to the promised Messiah; but they had obstinately rejected the doctrine of his preceding existence and divinity,² as being incompatible with the teachings of those Scriptures. After this doctrine and that of the creation of the world by the *Logos* or Son of God were formally recognized and adopted by the Christian church, the number of Jewish Christians began to dwindle; and if Christianity had depended for support on the Jewish people alone, it would soon have passed out of existence. But after the gospel of St. John had identified the *Logos* of the philosophical schools with the sacred object of Christian faith, hope, and worship, then the new religion was adopted by a large and increasing number of Gentiles in every province of the Roman Empire. To them Christianity gave life and reality to what had previously been only the vague and abstract speculations of philosophical inquiry; and the fate threatened by the Christian church against all unbelievers in Christ, that of eternal tortures in the world

¹ John i. 1, 3, 4, 14, 34.

² Gibbon's "Rome," vol. 2, p. 397 (Bohn, 1854).

to come, helped and terrified many a polytheist into embracing the religion that promised him security from so dreadful a future.

This short explanation of the real origin of the fundamental doctrine of Christianity will serve to show you how erroneous is the claim made by our Christian brethren, that the divinity of the second and third persons of their Trinity rests and is based upon the word and teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures. But Christians are obliged to make this claim, since they cannot pretend that the theology of Plato has in itself any semblance of the authority of a divine revelation; and the exigencies of their case compel them to turn to the Hebrew Scriptures as being the only source from which they may hope, in some way or other, to secure evidence of some kind or other that will enable them to give to their Platonic doctrines the appearance and credit of Divine sanction. The task that our Christian friends have been obliged to undertake is not only a difficult, but an impossible one; for the Hebrew Scriptures declare from first to last, and in the plainest terms of which language is susceptible, that there is but the One God, the Eternal, besides whom there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and none else; and all the statements and arguments to the contrary that may be made or urged by Christian Evangelists cannot have the slightest effect in the way of changing the assertion of the Almighty that there is no god with Him,¹ or of altering His command, "I am the Eternal thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; thou shalt have no other gods before Me."²

¹ Deut. xxxii. 39.

² Exod. xx. 2, 3.

But the Christian Evangelist will tell you that he also believes in One God, and One only; and that we Jews are mistaken if we think that Christians believe in more gods than one. He will tell you this, and he may perhaps even believe that he is perfectly sincere in making such a statement; but his self-deception, whether real or assumed, is no reason why we should permit him to lead us astray. For the Christian Evangelist will tell you in one breath that he believes that there is only One God; and the next instant he will endeavor to prove to you that the Hebrew Scriptures reveal the existence of a plurality of gods. He will tell you at one moment that he believes unreservedly in the word of the Eternal, that there is no god beside Him; and the next minute he will ask you, to whom was the Eternal speaking when He said, "Let *Us* make man in *Our* image"¹; and he will endeavor to convince you that the Eternal must on that occasion have been speaking to another god possessed of equal creative power with Himself; and that the use of the plural in this and other passages in the Hebrew Bible is proof that there must be more gods than one. The reason why our Christian friends show so much inconsistency between their professions of belief in the existence of only One God and their arguments in favor of a plurality of gods is easily seen, and it is this: that whatever Christians may say or profess about their belief in One God only, they do, as a matter of fact, worship more than one. It is not the worship of more than One God that in any way troubles our Christian brethren; they do that with

¹ Gen. i. 26.

zeal and without scruple; it is the calling their gods three gods that is repugnant to Christian feeling; and it is objectionable to them simply because the Hebrew Scriptures, which they are obliged to accept as the one incontestable source of revealed religion, do assert in a way that cannot be denied that there is but One God, and only One.

If, for the sake of argument, we assume the contrary, and suppose that the Hebrew Scriptures do admit the existence of a Father, a Son, and a Holy Spirit, as three co-equal and co-eternal gods, each of them having his own individuality,—and such is the Christian contention,—then there can be no possible sin or idolatry in Christians worshipping them as three distinct gods; and there should be no hesitation whatever on the part of our Christian friends in making their professions conform to their practice, and in frankly avowing that they do believe in and worship three gods, and not one alone. Granting the existence of three Divine Beings, each of whom is equally God and is distinguishable from the other two, it is and can be no sin to call them three gods. The sin and the error would consist in calling them One God. And if our Christian brethren are really of opinion that the Hebrew Scriptures justify them in worshipping, as God, three Divine Beings, each of whom has his own individuality and is therefore distinguishable from the other two, then they are guilty of sin toward two of these gods when they profess before men that they believe in One God, and One only; for their professions are in such case nothing else than a reflection upon and denial of the perfect and absolute divinity of the other two gods.

Our Christian brethren try to escape from the difficulties of their position by claiming that the Unity of the God or Godhead in which they believe is a compound and not an absolute Unity; and that the three gods whom they worship are one, because, and only because, each of them has an equal share in One Divine Nature, which itself is incapable of division or disunity. It is impossible to define clearly what our Christian friends may mean by these expressions; and we can only infer that the Unity in which they believe is more or less a figurative or fictitious Unity, and not a real one; and that their statement that the Divine Nature, as shared by their three gods, is incapable of division or disunity, means that there is always a perfect harmony and concord between the three gods; and that, because each of them has the same divine nature and is equally possessed of perfect wisdom and goodness, there is never any difference or disagreement between them. But, whatever may be the precise meaning of the expressions that are used by our Christian friends, the explanation they give is manifestly a mere trifling with words and conflicting ideas, and pure sophistry. Our Christian brethren use the expression *Godhead* as though it were synonymous with the word *God*, which it is not. The word *God* means the Divine Being who is God; while the term *Godhead*, which is nowhere found in the Hebrew Bible, signifies the office or quality rather than the person of God. When, therefore, our Christian friends say that the Godhead is composed of three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and that these three gods are one, because they equally

share the Divine Nature and are one or the same in essence; these expressions can only be taken to mean that the office or quality of God is held and shared by three Divine Beings, each of whom has an equal right to the name of God and to be called God, because each of them has the same divine nature and is possessed in an equal degree of all the powers and perfections which we associate with the quality or office of God. If this be, as Christians claim that it is, the theological doctrine that is embodied in and taught by the Hebrew Scriptures, then, as just now remarked, there can be no sin or idolatry in our Christian friends worshipping the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as three separate and distinct gods, and in frankly calling them three gods, or a triumvirate of gods. It is only in the case that the Hebrew Scriptures do not admit this principle of a combination or association of three individual beings or gods in the Godhead that the worship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as being three gods, and constituting a triumvirate of gods, can be either sinful or idolatrous; and the zeal and anxiety that have ever been shown by the Christian church in repudiating the idea that it believes in and worships three gods is all the admission that we Jews need ask for to prove that our Scriptures do not recognize the theological system that Christianity claims they do, but that they do on the contrary maintain that there is, in very truth and reality, not only One God, but also only One Being who is God.

Besides this doctrine of an association of three gods in the Godhead, which Christianity has adopted from the theories of Plato, it also seeks to establish upon

the teaching and authority of the Hebrew Scriptures that other of its fundamental principles,—which it has drawn from ancient Persian philosophy,¹—which places mankind and the whole universe under the dual and conflicting rule of two powers of almost equal potency, the God of Good on the one side, and the God of Evil on the other. But we will not this evening discuss that branch of the subject, but confine ourselves to the consideration of the alleged union of three persons in the Godhead, and to an examination of one or two of the more important of those passages in the Hebrew Scriptures upon which Christian theologians principally rely for the proof of the truth of that union.

Of all the questions that men are called upon to consider, there is none of greater moment to the human race than that which separates the Jew from the Christian with regard to the Unity of God; and if there be one thing more than another that we have the right to expect from writings of the inspired character of the Hebrew Scriptures, it is that upon this question they shall speak with the same clearness of expression, the same freedom from ambiguity, the same force, and with the same truth that characterize the commands, “Thou shalt not kill” and “Thou shalt not steal.” On a question of such vital importance as this one, which involves our duty to our Creator, our belief in the truth and sincerity of His revealed Word, and the happiness of our souls throughout all eternity, we have the right to expect that our Scriptures shall

¹ Prideaux, *Connections*, Part 1, Book 4, p. 251, Edinburgh edition, 1779.

speak in words that will leave no doubt as to their meaning, no room for discussion, and no chance of coming to a wrong conclusion; and it must be admitted that it is in language of this character that the Hebrew Scriptures do speak. Nothing can be more clearly and plainly expressed than the command that was given us by God at Mount Sinai, "I am the Eternal thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt; thou shalt have no other gods before Me."¹ There is no room for doubt as to the meaning of the words of the Eternal spoken to us by the mouth of His prophet Moses, "See, now, that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me."² There is no ground for discussion as to the meaning of the declarations of the Almighty delivered to us by the prophet Isaiah, "I, even I, am the Eternal; and beside Me there is no saviour"³; "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no god"⁴; "I am the Eternal, and there is none else; beside Me there is no god"⁵; "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me."⁶ And there is no possibility of forming a wrong conclusion as to the meaning of the command that was given us by God through the prophet Hosea, "I am the Eternal thy God from the land of Egypt; and thou shalt know no god but Me, and there is no saviour beside Me."⁷ All these and the other similar declarations of the Almighty recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures state as plainly as human language can be made to express the sublime truth, that there is One God, the Eternal, and that beside

¹ Exod. xx. 2, 3. ² Deut. xxxii. 39. ³ Isaiah xliii. 11.

⁴ Isaiah xlv. 6. ⁵ Isaiah xlv. 5. ⁶ *Ibid.*, xlv. 9. ⁷ Hosea xiii. 4.

Him there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and no one else. Statements and expressions of this nature are not those that can permit us to believe, as our Christian brethren are so anxious to have us believe, that, associated with the Eternal in the Godhead, there are two other gods like unto Himself in every respect, having the same Divine Nature with Himself, and entitled, equally with Himself, to the worship He has commanded us to give to none but Himself. And to every kind of question and argument that may be urged by our Christian brethren in support of their contention that the Hebrew Scriptures reveal the existence of a plurality of gods, and that they teach the doctrine that there are two other gods united with the Eternal in the Godhead, and that there is another saviour, it is sufficient for the Jew to reply that the Eternal has declared that beside Himself there is no god, no saviour, and none like Him. No other answer is needed.

Other answers may, however, be given to the Christian interpretation of those passages in the Hebrew Bible upon which our Christian friends base their claim that the trinitarian doctrine of their religion is founded upon the word and teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures; and if we take notice of some of those other answers, it is simply for the purpose of bringing to your attention the peculiar ways in which Christians pervert the word, spirit and meaning of those Scriptures, and of showing you how weak and valueless are the premises from which they draw the most weighty of conclusions. And in discussing any of the passages in the Hebrew Scriptures upon which our Christian brethren rely

for proof of the truth of their doctrine of an association or union of three gods in the Godhead, we shall find that they study those Scriptures, not for the purpose of learning and accepting the real truth, but with the sole object of discovering in them some justification for their belief; and that they ignore every statement and declaration that does not suit them, and endeavor to pervert to their purposes every passage that they think may be made to help them.

Necessity is said to be the mother of invention; and, driven by the necessities of their position, our Christian friends have made some very interesting discoveries. They have, for instance, discovered that the Jews of modern times know nothing about their Scriptures and the religion of their ancestors; that Moses taught the doctrine of the Trinityship of God to the children of Israel; that the Israelites believed in a union of three gods in the Godhead, and worshipped three divine beings as God from the time of Moses down to that of Christ, and from this latter period down to about the tenth or twelfth century of the Christian era, when, under the influence of their Rabbis, they discarded their ancestral faith, because it was also the religion of a persecuting Christianity, and adopted instead the doctrine of the absolute Unity of God, which they now hold; that, consequently, modern Judaism is Rabbinism, and not Mosaism; and that it is Christianity, and not Judaism, that is to-day the true representative of Mosaism. These are some of the wonderful discoveries that modern Christian Evangelists have made; but, in announcing them, they have characteristically failed to notice and explain many things that are inconsistent with and deny

the truth and value of their pretended discoveries. Thus, if it be true that Moses taught the doctrine of the Trinityship of God to the people of Israel; if it be true that he told them there were three persons in the Godhead, and that each one of these three Divine Beings had his own individuality and was distinguishable from the other two, then these Christian Evangelists should explain to us how it came to pass that Moses not only failed to set forth the doctrine they say he taught us in words that were suitable to it, but used, on the contrary, language that had the very opposite meaning. And if it be true that the children of Israel from the days of Moses and at the time of Christ, and afterward, for more than one-half of the period of the Christian dispensation, believed in the union of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as three gods together constituting the Godhead, then the Christian Evangelists who relate these fables to us should also tell us what was the cause of all those cruel and relentless persecutions of the Jews by the Christians that drove the former to abandon the doctrine they are thus said to have shared with the latter; and how it happened that, for ten centuries or more, Christianity should have expended all the fury of its hate upon the people of Israel for believing that about the nature of the Deity which, for the greater part of another ten centuries, it handed them over to fire and the sword, torture and the stake for not believing. The fact is, that there is not a statement that is too extravagant, nor an argument that is too unfounded for Christian Evangelists to make or advance, if thereby they can only give themselves the comfort of thinking that in some way, or at some time, the Jewish Scriptures

and the Jewish people have given sanction to the trinitarian dogma of their creed.

The whole of the claim made by Christian Evangelists, that modern Judaism is Rabbinism, and not Mosaism; that Christianity, and not Judaism, is to-day the true representative of Mosaism; that Moses taught the doctrine of the Trinityship of God to the children of Israel, and that the latter believed in a union of three gods in the Godhead, and worshipped three beings as God until they discarded the Mosaism of their fathers for the Rabbinism of modern times; the whole of this claim rests upon nothing more substantial and upon nothing else than the interpretation given by modern Christian Evangelists to the words of the great charge delivered by Moses to the children of Israel.¹ Christian Evangelists contend that that charge should be rendered, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our Gods, the Lord is united," rather than in the usual way, "the Lord our God, the Lord is One." They found their argument upon the fact that the expression "Our God" is, in the Hebrew text, given in the plural form, *Elohenu*; and that the word *echad*, one, is sometimes used in the Hebrew Bible to express a figurative and not an absolute unity, as, for instance, in the verse, "Therefore doth a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they become, *basar echad*, one flesh."² And because the name of God is mentioned three times in the passage, *Adoshem, Elohenu, Adoshem*, with the word *echad* uniting, as they express it, the three in one, therefore Christian Evangelists contend that there is here a plain indication of a union of three gods in the

¹ Deut. vi. 4.

² Gen. ii. 24.

Godhead. Our Christian friends treat the threefold repetition of the name of God as though it were the names of three gods. And it is from this kind of an argument, from reasoning of this nature, and from nothing more substantial, that learned and enlightened Christian divines of the twentieth century draw all those conclusions that were just now mentioned to you, and gravely and soberly tell us that Moses taught the doctrine of the Trinityship of God to the children of Israel, and that the latter believed in the union of three gods in the Godhead until they abandoned the Mosaism of their fathers for the Rabbinism of the middle ages! The most courteous way in which we can express our estimation of the truth and value of the Christian argument is by saying that our Christian brethren do not give us any opportunity to congratulate them upon the strength and solidity of the foundations on which their religion is constructed.

The verse now under consideration furnishes us with a notable instance of the inconsistency that has always been characteristic of our Christian friends in their treatment of the Hebrew Scriptures. It has always been a cause of complaint to them that we Jews will persist in interpreting our Scriptures in a literal way, and in giving them the meaning that the words used naturally imply, and the application that the context plainly indicates; and yet they themselves take in their most literal sense every word or expression that they think will be of the slightest use to them; while to verses or sentences that do not suit them they give any typical or figurative interpretation that they consider best calculated to serve them; but without, in either case, pay-

ing any regard to the meaning and application of the context, or to the dependence of any given word or expression upon other statements that may govern its meaning or restrict its application. Thus, when Moses declares that "The Eternal our God, the Eternal is One," Christian Evangelists find the words "our God" expressed in the Hebrew text in the plural form *Elohenu*, which is nothing else than an instance of the use of that most common of all idioms, the plural of majesty; and that it is a plural of majesty is proved by the declarations made by the Almighty that beside Himself there is no god, none like Him, and no one else. But, because it suits the purposes of our Christian friends to do so, they take the plural word *Elohenu* in a strictly literal way, and translate it "our Gods." In vain does the Eternal declare that beside Himself there is no God; in vain do Moses and the other prophets of the Old Testament reiterate the statement that besides the Eternal there is no god; the plural word *Elohenu* is used, and therefore the Christian Evangelist insists that it cannot be a plural of majesty, but must be interpreted in its strictly literal sense, and must mean a plurality of gods, and be intended to indicate the existence of other gods beside the Eternal. But when Moses says that "the Eternal is *echad*, One," then the Christian Evangelist does not accept the word *echad* in its literal sense of one, and one only, for that interpretation does not suit him; and so he regards it as a mere figurative expression, having the meaning it has when we say that "husband and wife are one," and he therefore renders the verse, "The Lord our gods, the Lord is united." In this way, and because, as already remarked, our Christian friends

study the Hebrew Scriptures for the purpose only of finding in them evidence of some kind or other that may be made to appear to support their doctrines, they twist and pervert the declaration of the Unity of God made by Moses into an acknowledgment and a proof of the union of other gods with the Eternal. And, then, full of self-sanctifying grace, they complacently tell us that Christianity, and not Judaism, is to-day the true representative of Mosaism.

The cardinal number *one* is expressed in Hebrew by the word *echad*; but, because this word is sometimes used in our Scriptures to express a figurative or fictitious unity, our Christian friends draw the conclusion that it must have that signification when employed by Moses to express the Unity of the Eternal; the Christian inference being that the word *echad* must always have, and can only have, the meaning of a figurative or compound unity. We will apply their reasoning to the analogous use of the word *one* in the English language, and we will see how wrong and illogical our Christian friends are; although it may be deemed unfair on our part to measure the value of the Christian argument, or, indeed, the value of any Christian argument, by the standard of logic and truth and common sense; for, in matters of religion, and particularly in questions affecting the interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures, logic and truth and common sense are qualities whose exercise is as carefully eschewed by our Christian brethren as they could be, were they the acknowledged devices of their Evil One.

When we say, in English, that "A man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife

and they shall be *one* flesh,"¹ we use the word *one* in precisely the same sense in which the word *echad* is employed in the same passage in the Hebrew Bible. When we say in English that "All the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was assembled together as *one* man"²; that "All the people arose as *one* man"³; or that "All the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as *one* man"⁴; in each of these cases we use the English word *one* with exactly the same meaning with which the word *echad* is employed in the corresponding verses in the Hebrew Bible; and if, in those passages, when rendered in Hebrew, the word *echad* represents a figurative or compound unity, then does the word *one* also represent a compound or figurative unity when the same sentences are expressed in the English language. The analogy between the use of the Hebrew word *echad* and that of the English word *one* is perfect and complete. But, because the English word *one* may be thus used to express a figurative or compound unity, we would have a very poor opinion of the intelligence of the man who should from thence try to argue that the English word *one* must always have that application, and must always be taken to represent a compound or fictitious unity, and that it can never have any other meaning; that the words "one apple" must mean three apples; that "one house" must mean three houses; "one man," three men; "one angel," three angels; and "One God," three gods. Yet such is the nature of the Christian argument, and such is the conclusion that Christian Evangelists would have us come

¹ Gen. ii. 24.

³ Judges xx. 8.

² Judges xx. 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

to with regard to the meaning and application of the word *echad*, when employed by Moses to express the Unity of the Eternal.

Our Christian brethren may also be told that their version of the passage under consideration does not agree with that which is said to have been given it by Jesus; and that the latter rendered it in a way that has the same literal meaning of One God, and of One Being only who is God, that the Jews of the present day attach to it; a circumstance that also conflicts with the modern Christian pretension that Moses taught, and the Jews of ancient times believed in, the doctrine of a union of three gods in the Godhead. For it is related in the New Testament that when one of the scribes asked Jesus, "Which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord." And the scribe said unto him, "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is One God, and there is none other but He."¹ Our Christian friends can refer to the chapter in St. Mark that gives this dialogue between Jesus and the scribe; and if they can construe either the Greek or the English versions of it in any way that will mean "The Lord our Gods, the Lord is united," they may merit credit for their zeal and their ingenuity, but none for any more commendable quality.

Another answer that may be made to our Christian friends is that they conveniently forget the fact that Moses made some other statements to the children of Israel that are incompatible with the modern Chris-

¹ Mark xii. 28, 29, 32.

tian pretension that he taught them the doctrine of a union of three gods in the Godhead. His other charges to the Israelites, "Unto thee it was shown, that thou mightest know, that the Eternal is the God; there is none else besides Him,"¹ and "Know therefore this day, and reflect in thy heart, that the Eternal is the God in the heavens above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else"²; these other charges are absolute contradictions and flat denials of the Christian pretension concerning what Moses taught. And when Moses addressed his parting words to the congregation of Israel, and delivered to them his inspired song, he said, speaking for the Eternal, "See, now, that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me."³ Far, then, from Moses teaching the Israelites that there were two other gods united with the Eternal in the Godhead, he told them that the Eternal was the Only God, that there were no gods with Him, and that there was no one else. The Christian claim that Moses taught us Jews the doctrine of the Trinityship of God is as utterly devoid of truth as is their statement that we believed in and worshipped a union of three gods in the Godhead until we abandoned the Mosaism of our fathers for the Rabbinism of the middle ages.

And if our Christian friends should be still unsatisfied, and require a little more comfort, we may further remind them that they also ignore the fact that the Eternal has declared that beside Himself there is no god, none like Him, and no one else; so that, whatever may be the connection in which the word

¹ Deut. iv. 35.

² *Ibid.*, 39.

³ *Ibid.*, xxxii, 39.

echad may be used in other passages in the Hebrew Scriptures, it cannot, in the injunction given by Moses to the children of Israel, have any other meaning than that the Eternal is literally and truly *One*, to the exclusion of all others. Whatever our Christian friends may say or think, we cannot, by any kind of an argument, not even by this one that the vivid imaginations of modern Christian Evangelists have evolved out of the most formal and emphatic declarations to the contrary, force upon the Eternal an association or union with other gods, when He declares that beside Himself there is no god, none like Him, and none else.

These are some of the answers that may be given to those Christian Evangelists who, for want of better evidence of the truth of their trinitarian doctrine, try to make us believe that the declarations of the Unity of God made by Moses were intended by him to be an acknowledgment of the union of two other gods with the Eternal; and that Moses made use of words that had the plainest of meanings for the purpose of enunciating or suggesting so very different and opposite a doctrine as that which they are so anxious to foist upon him. If such be the light in which our Christian friends would have us Jews regard our Scriptures,—if they would have us think and believe that our Scriptures not only do not mean what they purport to say, but that they mean the very contrary to what they do say,—then we are entitled to tell them that it would be far more honest and more respectable on the part of any person who might entertain that opinion of the Hebrew Scriptures to say openly that they are not a safe guide, that they are not reliable, not

worthy of credence, and not to be accepted as divinely inspired, rather than to profess to believe in their inspiration, and then exert one's utmost ingenuity in twisting and perverting the plainest of statements they may contain to a meaning the very opposite to their natural and obvious import. Not even the necessities of Christianity can justify that kind of work.

In the opinion of our Christian friends, one of the most direct and convincing proofs of the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures is that which they say is given in the verse in Isaiah which they cite as foretelling his miraculous birth.¹ In that verse the prophet Isaiah tells Achaz, king of Judah, that, as a sign from the Almighty, a certain young woman would become the mother of a son, and would call his name Immanuel. As the mother of Jesus did not call his name *Immanuel*, which means "God with us," and as he was never called by that name, it does not suit our Christian friends to interpret that part of the verse in a literal way; they therefore pretend that the word *Immanuel* should not be regarded as a proper name, but only as descriptive of the nature or character of the child to be born; and that Jesus was *Immanuel*, because he was "God with us." We will pass over the question of the child's name, although it is as much an essential part of the sign as is his birth; and we will only consider the verse from the point of view of its applicability to Jesus of Nazareth.

The verse in question is susceptible of two interpretations, each of which depends on the different

¹ Isaiah vii. 14.

meaning that may be given to the Hebrew word *Ngalmah*, which is the term applied to the mother of the child. That word means a young woman; and it is a term that can be applied to any young woman, whether married or unmarried; and, according to the different interpretation and application that may be given to the word, the birth of the child would be either a miraculous event or an ordinary one. Our Christian brethren take the view that it must have been the intention of the prophet to predict a miraculous birth, because they claim that if it were otherwise, then the birth of the child could not be a sign. In other words, our Christian friends claim that a sign must be a miracle, and that only a miracle can be a sign; and they say that the allusion was to the birth of Jesus, which they claim to have been a miraculous one.

But our Christian brethren are in error in assuming that a sign must necessarily be a miracle, or something of a miraculous character; for the most ordinary event, or any specified succession of ordinary events, may be in every respect a sign, that is, an evidence or assurance of the happening of a certain other event. Thus, when Abraham's servant sought for a sign from the Almighty, by which he might be guided in his selection of a wife for Isaac, he did not ask for a miracle as a sign, but, simply, that the maiden who was destined to be Isaac's wife should, when he would ask her for a drink of water, not only give him a drink, but also offer to draw water for his camels.¹ Again, when Gideon asked for a sign from the Lord, by which he might know

¹ Gen. xxiv. 12-20, 42-46.

that he would succeed in battle against the Midianites and their allies, and free Israel from their yoke, he also did not ask for anything miraculous as a sign, but, simply, that the dew should fall upon the fleece of wool, and not upon the ground around it; and, as a second or confirmatory sign, that the fleece should remain dry, while the ground around it should become wet with dew.¹

When we consider the circumstances under which the sign was given, we find that our Christian brethren give the sign a meaning and an application that make it ridiculous. For it is related in Isaiah, in the same chapter in which the birth of the child is prophesied, that the kings of Israel and of Syria had allied themselves against Achaz, king of Judah, and were marching against Jerusalem. When the news of their advance was told to Achaz, "his heart trembled, with the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest are shaken before the wind." Then the Almighty sent the prophet Isaiah to Achaz, to comfort and encourage him, and to assure him that his enemies would not succeed in their designs against him. And in order to give him more confidence, the Almighty, through the prophet, said to Achaz, "Ask thee a sign from the Eternal thy God; ask it in the depth or high up above." But Achaz said, "I will not ask; and I will not tempt the Eternal." Upon which the prophet continued, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, this young woman, *Hangalmah* (indicating her), will become the mother of a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Cream and honey

¹ Judges vi. 36-40.

shall he eat, so soon as he knoweth to refuse the evil, and to choose the good. For before yet the child shall know to refuse the evil, and to choose the good, the land shall be forsaken of the kings of whom thou feelest dread.”¹

We have here a perfectly plain, simple, intelligible, and well-connected account of the circumstances under which the sign was given. It was a sign offered by God to Achaz; and the birth of a male child, born of the young woman who was then designated, and his receiving from his mother the name of Immanuel, were to be an assurance to Achaz that, before the child in question would be old enough to distinguish what was pleasant from what was unpleasant to the taste, he and his country would be delivered from the formidable and dreaded enemies who were then threatening them. And it is perfectly immaterial to the right and intelligent understanding of the sign whether the young woman selected by the prophet, and pointed out by him to Achaz, were already married or not; the only difference being that, in the latter case, her selection would also imply that she would at once or in a short time contract marriage. But, from what is said by Isaiah in the next chapter,² it is understood that the young woman pointed out by him was his own wife.

The sign thus given to Achaz would not have been a sign or token to him if the prophet had told him in vague terms that a young woman, that is, some young woman, without specifying any one in particular, would give birth to a son. But the statement that one particular

¹ Isaiah vii. 1-16.

² *Ibid.*, viii. 18.

young woman, pointed out by the prophet, would become the mother of a son was a proper kind of a sign to give to Achaz, for it was the prediction of an event, the happening of which could only be positively known to a person divinely inspired. Moreover, in order that the birth of a son to the particular young woman thus designated by the prophet should be a sign to Achaz, and give him that confidence in his ability to overcome his enemies which it was intended to impart to him, it was necessary that the promised event should not only be accomplished during his lifetime, but also that it should be fulfilled as soon as it was possible to bring it to pass. For the danger threatening Achaz was an imminent one; he and his people were panic-stricken; and, the sign having been given, any delay in its accomplishment beyond the time when it could have been fulfilled would not only have been no encouragement to Achaz, but a positive disheartening to him and his subjects.

All these things are plain and easily understood; what then shall we say of the Christian interpretation of the sign thus given to Achaz, which finds its fulfilment in the birth of Jesus of Nazareth,—an event that did not take place until 600 years or more after the death of Achaz? What a travesty, what a mockery, of the Word of God! Because our Christian friends have adopted the belief that the birth of Jesus was a miraculous one, and therefore want to find in the Hebrew Scriptures some justification for that belief; and because they have here a verse that they think will suit their purpose, they claim that the sign given to Achaz must be interpreted as prophesying a miraculous birth; and

that the allusion must have been to the of Jesus. They ask us to believe that Isiah offered to Achaz, as a sure and positive token by which the latter might know that he would overcome his enemies, the prediction that, 600 years after his death, a child would be born; and that the prophet, having in view this birth of a child more than 600 years after the death of Achaz, deemed it necessary to enter into the further assurance that before the child in question would be old enough to distinguish what was pleasant from what was unpleasant to the taste, Achaz would be delivered from his enemies! A sign is something which foreshows; it is something that is an evidence and an assurance that a certain event or result will follow; and it must precede the result or event that is to follow, just as a cause precedes the effect; but our Christian friends think nothing of reversing this natural order of things. They think nothing of making the fulfilment of the sign given to Achaz follow by more than 600 years that defeat of his enemies which it was intended to foreshow; and they ask us to believe that an event that was to happen 600 years after the death of Achaz could have been a token to him that success would attend him in his struggle with the kings of Israel and of Syria. Again we must say that we cannot congratulate our Christian brethren upon their method of interpreting our Scriptures, nor upon the soundness of the arguments they offer for our consideration.

The time during which I may claim your attention this evening will not permit me to notice any other of the passages in our Scriptures by which our Christian friends try to prove the union of two other gods with the Eternal,

and the existence of another saviour than the Eternal alone; but the same peculiarities that mark their interpretation of the two verses we have been considering also characterize their rendering of every other passage by which they endeavor to establish the truth of the distinguishing doctrines of their religion. From any one of their arguments you can judge the nature of all the others; and there is not one case in which the Christian rendering of the Hebrew Scriptures is not as wrong and unfounded, and not as devoid of truth and reason, as are their interpretations and applications of the two verses we have been discussing. Nor is this to be wondered at; for the sole object of our Christian friends is to prove that to be true which the Almighty has declared to be false; to foist upon the Hebrew Scriptures doctrines that they repudiate; and to make those Scriptures appear to disclose the existence of other gods and another saviour than the Eternal alone, when every writer of those Scriptures affirms and reaffirms the glorious truth that the Eternal is the Only God and the Only Saviour, and that beside Him there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and none else.

To conclude: the religion of the New Testament is not that of the Old; nor is it a development in any higher and more spiritual form of the principles and teachings of the Hebrew Bible. The New Testament, with its pagan doctrines of a union of three gods in the Godhead, and of a Fourth Being, or Evil Spirit, who is antagonistic to the three gods, and is possessed of power almost equal to theirs, and to propitiate whom one of the three gods was offered as a sacrifice, is as far below the sublimity of the Hebrew Scriptures, with their revelation of One

Supreme Being, by whose command all other beings have come into existence, to whose will and purposes all other beings are subservient, and for the manifestation of whose glory everything in heaven and on earth has been created, as the imaginations of man and the limited intelligence and imperfect works of man are beneath the infinite wisdom and wonderful creations of the Lord of the universe.

The selection of our people by the Almighty to be unto Him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation¹ was not made in order that we Jews should disbelieve His declarations that beside Himself there is no god, and no saviour, none like Him, and none else, and give credit to the Christian who tells us that there are two other gods united with the Eternal in the Godhead, and that there is another saviour. It was not shown unto us Israelites, that we might know, that the Eternal is the God, there is none else besides Him,² in order that we might accept as our spiritual guide and teacher the Christian who tells us that Moses taught us Jews the doctrine of the Trinityship of God, and that we believed in and worshipped a union of three gods in the Godhead until we abandoned the Mosaism of our fathers for the Rabbinism of the middle ages! It was not in order that we Jews should accept the statements and arguments of people who tell us, one minute, that they believe in only One God, and try, the next minute, to prove that the Hebrew Scriptures reveal the existence of a plurality of gods; who profess that they believe in the inspiration of those Scriptures, and then labor to pervert them in a way that makes them ridiculous; who tell us that the birth

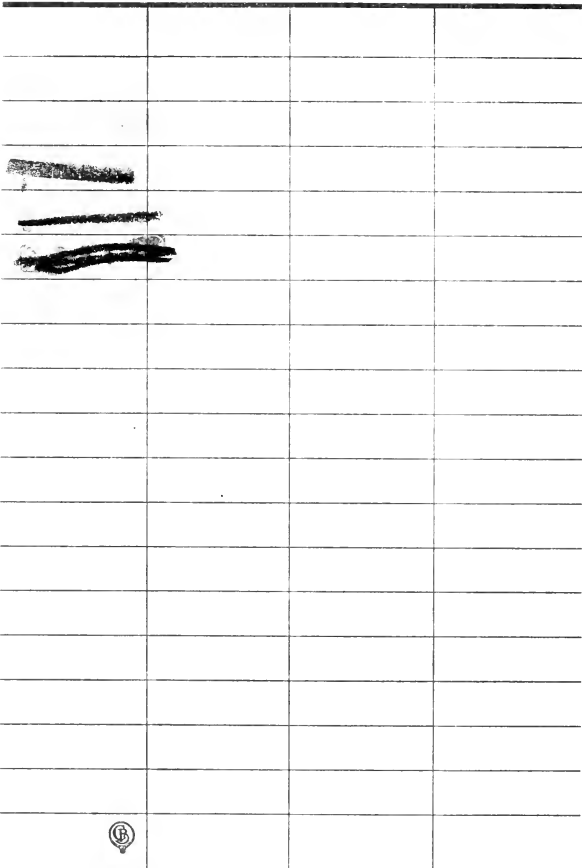
¹ Exod. xix. 6.

² Deut. iv. 35.

of a child, 600 years after the death of a man, can be a sign and a token to that man that he will overcome the dangers that threaten him; it was not for any of these purposes that out of the heavens the Almighty caused us to hear His voice, and upon the earth to see His great fire, and to hear His words out of the midst of the fire.¹ It was not in order that we Jews should believe the Christian, any more than it was that we should give credence to the Egyptian or the Canaanite, the Assyrian or the Persian, the Greek or the Roman, the Brahmin or the Buddhist, that the Lord our God selected us as His witnesses, and made us the custodians of His law; but in order that we might believe Him, and Him alone. "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Eternal, and My servant whom I have chosen, in order that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He; before Me there was no god formed, and after Me there will be none. I, even I, am the Eternal; and beside Me there is no saviour."²

¹ Deut. iv. 36.

² Isaiah xliii. 10, 11.

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